SPECIAL EDITION

CLASSIC ROCK

LEGENDS OF THE '60s

STARRING

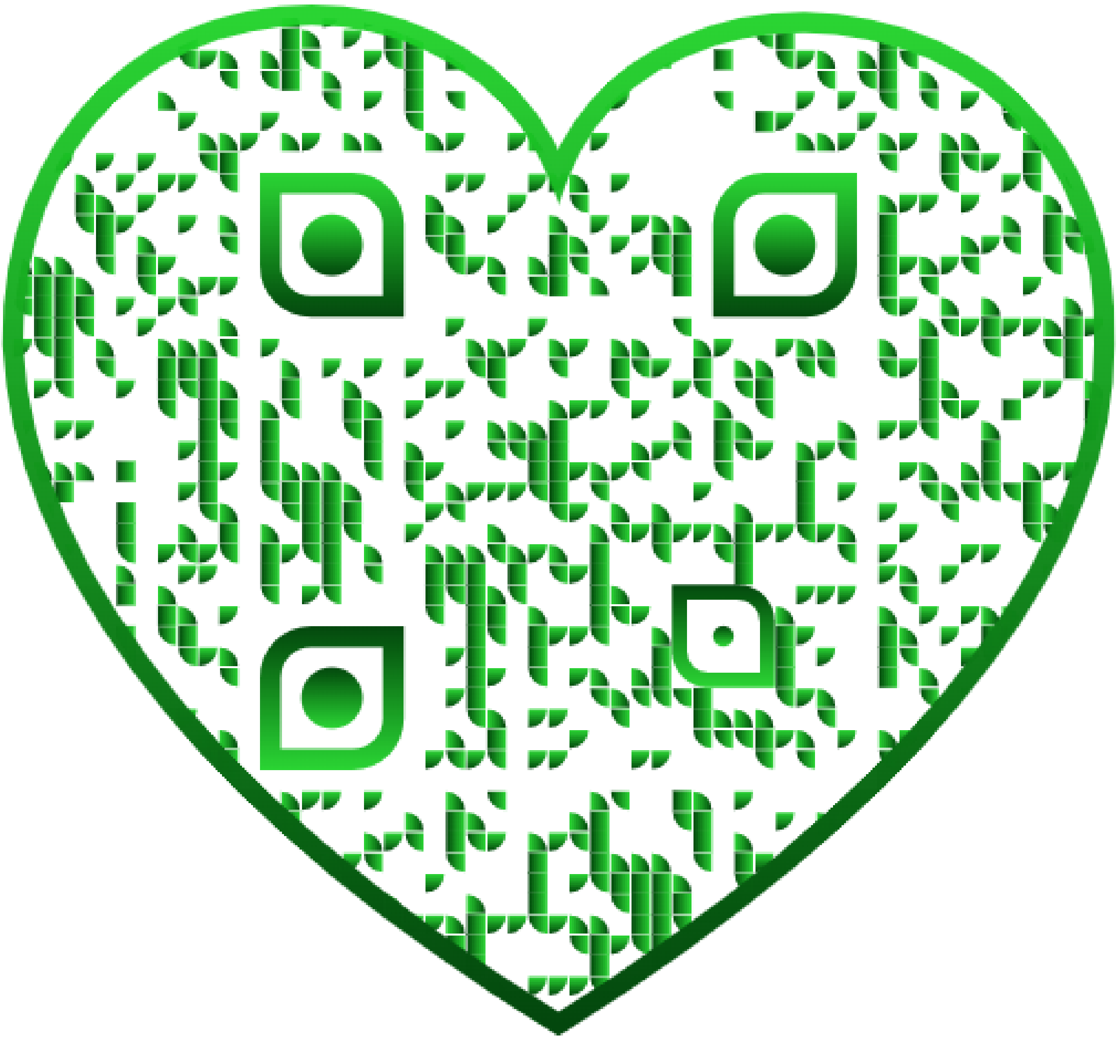
The BEATLES
The STONES
HENDRIX
PINK FLOYD
THE WHO

YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION?
10 YEARS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Digital Edition

FUTURE

SECOND EDITION



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"The past is a foreign country," someone once wrote. "They do things differently there." If you grew up in the 70s and 80s, the 60s weren't so much a foreign country as a mythological universe: a world populated by legendary characters and unbelievable events.

Men walked on the moon. America fought a war in Vietnam. There was the Civil Rights Struggle, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Bay Of Pigs, the Manson Family murders, the Profumo Affair, Chappaquiddick – and England *actually won the World Cup*.

JFK, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Robert Kennedy and Che Guevara were all assassinated. Eddie Cochran, Marilyn Monroe, Sam Cooke, Otis Redding, Lenny Bruce and Brian Jones never made it out alive. Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison were dead within a year of the decade ending. Skirts got shorter, bras were burnt, drugs were pretty much compulsory and sex was invented. ("Sexual intercourse began," wrote poet Philip Larkin, "In nineteen sixty-three… Between the end of the "Chatterley" ban / And the Beatles' first LP.")

And then there was *the soundtrack*.

Motown, Stax, Chess, Atlantic soul, Phil Spector, bubblegum pop, girl groups, surf music, skiffle, Northern soul, Mod, funk, folk… Even if rock music hadn't been invented, we would still be looking at the 60s with slack-jawed wonder.

But this was rock's hey-day. From its birth in the mid-60s to the end of the decade, rock music exploded in every way possible – a ravenous, ambitious and infectious strain of music that spread like a dose of clap in a hippie commune. It was such an astonishing burst of creativity that it's possible to argue that, by the end of the 60s, rock had already done *everything it ever really would do*.

Blues rock, heavy rock, heavy metal, punk rock, prog rock, psychedelia, country rock, music festivals – they all started in the 60s. The artists who followed may have been louder, heavier and faster, but they all owed a debt to the giants of that decade.

This special edition collects some of *Classic Rock*'s 60s coverage from over the years. One magazine can't possibly cover all the great music and stories from that amazing decade, so think of this as just a guide – to a foreign country where they did things very differently indeed.

Scott Rowley,
Editor In Chief

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Contents

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Features

8 The Dawn of Rock
As the 50s became the 60s, the same blues and pioneering rock'n'roll dominated the charts – so how did it evolve into rock music?

10 25 Songs That Shaped Rock
The old-school blues, gospel, skiffle and rock'n'roll tunes that influenced the songwriters of 60s rock.

12 1966 And All That
Dylan, Beatles, Rolling Stones: it was the year that built rock and one of the most important turning points for music in the 20th century. Here's how it all took off…

16 1966 Blues
Who were the main players in shaping the 60s guitar sound and how did they do it? All-star profiles of legendary axemen Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, Peter Green and Eric Clapton.

22 John Mayall & The Bluesbreakers
The band's self-titled 'Beano' album was a crucial historical benchmark and the vital missing link that straddled blues and the genesis of rock. This is the story behind how it was made.

31 66 From '66
As a focus of the decade, we detail 66 classic singles and albums from the year that changed rock music forever.

46 Story Behind The Song
How little-known pop-rock band The Zombies came together to make one of the decade's most enduring classic songs, *She's Not There*.

48 Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac
Long before the likes of *Rumours* and *Tusk*, Fleetwood Mac were a serious blues rock outfit. This is the full story of how they laid the foundations for those who followed in their wake.

56 Cream
Ginger Baker, Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce. A supergroup before the term was invented and favourites of Hendrix, they were the kings of 60s psyche rock – but the notoriety came at a cost.

61 Blind Faith
Steve Winwood's all-star ensemble only produced one album but it was a 60s classic.

62 The Doors
Continually discovered by a new generation, the Doors could only have been forged in the 60s. This feature investigates the early years of the sun kings and separates the myths of Jim Morrison from the facts.

74 Story Behind The Song
Instantly recognisable from its first note, *Wild Thing* by The Troggs perfectly encapsulated the naïveity of the 60s sexual revolution. Something was in the air, but it didn't always smell good.

76 The Small Faces
The mods were on the march and along with the Kinks and The Who, The Small Faces blurred the lines between rock, soul, psychedelia and the English Condition. This is the story behind their classic *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake* album

80 The Who
One of the 60s most notorious rabble-rousing aggro lads, this is the story of what's widely considered one of the greatest live albums of all time: *Live At Leeds*.

88 Story Behind The Song
Influenced by John Coltrane and Ravi Shankar, The Byrds' *Eight Miles High* was an early and key benchmark in psychedelic rock.

90 Piper At The Gates Of Dawn
Pink Floyd's debut album would be eclipsed by their later conceptual works, but at the time it landed like an alien spaceship. We spoke to Vic Singh, the photographer behind the legendary sleeve artwork.

96 Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
The album when The Beatles turned on, tuned in, and dropped out. Almost altogether. By the end of the decade in question, their demise would be assured.

100 The Cosmic Variety Show
In 1967, Pink Floyd and The Jimi Hendrix Experience went on a package tour with The Move, The Nice, Amen Corner, Eire Apparent and Outer Limits. You will have never seen anything like it in your life.

108 Story Behind The Song
Gimme Shelter may have sounded insane and controversial in 1969 but it's an iron-clad banger that's stood the test of time.

110 Frank Zappa
Freak out! How the composer, songwriter and leader of The Mothers Of Invention consistently pushed the envelope of progressive rock's avant-garde.

114 The birth of heavy
Just as it did 10 years earlier, the rock scene started undergoing tremendous upheaval towards the end of 1969. This is the culmination of rock's permissive new decade and how it would usher in another 10 years of classic rock.

128 It's 1969, OK?
The future's bright; the future's heavy: some of the stone-cold grooves of heaviosity that closed out the 60s and also eventually helped kill off the hippies in the bargain. It's a gas, baby!

GETTY X2

The Who: each member of the band had a separate influence.

GETTY

The Rolling Stones: Mick and Keith studied the blues.

THE DAWN OF ROCK

"The blues had a baby and they named it rock'n'roll," said Muddy Waters. That makes rock the exalted grandchild with R&B, soul – even surf music – on the birth certificate…

Words: **Ed Mitchell**

It's December 5, 1964. A bunch of oiks from Dartford, London, hit number one in the British charts with a cover of an old Howlin' Wolf record. A couple of weeks earlier, The Rolling Stones run through *Little Red Rooster* on TV show *Ready Steady Go!* As Mick Jagger and then boss and guitarist Brian Jones mince outrageously for the cameras, a fresh-faced Keith Richards (back when he had a face, natch) lazily strums his way through the song's three chords.

It's an iconic appearance but, beyond the haircuts and tight trousers, it's important because it marks a transition point for popular music. This is the first and last time a blues song will top the UK charts. Within a year or so, five British kids trying to cut an authentic Chicago blues record won't be good enough. It was time for a new sound. Can you dig it?

The music we now refer to as "rock" was not born in a vacuum. For the British "yoof" it all begins in 1955 with Lonnie Donegan's skiffle single, *Rock Island Line*. A refugee of Chris Barber's Jazz Band, Donegan and his take on an old Lead Belly tune gets kids like Jimmy Page, John Lennon and Paul McCartney wrapped 'round guitars. This is the DIY punk rock thing 20-odd years before Johnny Rotten and Sid Vicious were even cleared for take off…

GETTY

The Who scrunched their collective influences into a tight ball and called it "Maximum R&B" for dramatic effect. Long live rock!

1955 also sees the release of an American flick called *Blackboard Jungle*. Loaded with social commentary, the film found actors Glenn Ford and Sidney Poitier clipping earholes at a tough inner city school. Before that movie, excitement for your average British teenager involved shoving frogspawn down a girl's frock and laying waste to your schoolmates' dreams with a prize conker, all while dressed in a pair of your dad's old flannels. Post-*Blackboard Jungle*, you were rampaging through the bloody cinema, tearing up the seats and losing your shit to Bill Haley & The Comet's *Rock Around The Clock*.

The ironic thing is, just about everything that sparked the birth of rock in the mid 60s happened a decade earlier. *Blackboard Jungle*; Elvis Presley's *Heartbreak Hotel*; the stellar rise of Buddy Holly. Yes, The Beatles raised the bar cos they wrote their own songs. That was Buddy's influence. Just about every young British guitarist of the early 60s [to date in fact] made their bones ripping off Chuck Berry. Songs about shagging and teenage rebellion? Yeah, Eddie Cochran was all over that stuff in the late 50s, daddio.

By the start of the 60s, Buddy and Eddie are dead and America has effectively had its balls removed, musically speaking. The charts ooze with unthreatening, pimply crooners. Even Elvis was phoning it in. The one sign of life is the emerging surf scene with cats like Dick Dale knocking the kids bandy down on the beach.

Meanwhile, Brit kids immerse themselves even deeper in the blues with most of the movers and shakers that will shape rock catching the visiting caravan tours that feature icons like Muddy Waters and gospel artist Sister Rosetta Tharpe. There's another key influence coming through via Stax Records in Memphis, Tennessee. Captured in one take in 1962, *Green Onions* by Booker T & The MGs fuels the sound of mod groups like The Small Faces via their keyboardist Ian McLagan. It's the reason that rock's future germinators like Traffic's Steve Winwood and Deep Purple's Jon Lord found themselves behind Hammond organs. The recording also puts soul into the forefront as an important ingredient in any Brit group's sound, along with blues and R&B of course.

That mix of influences is exemplified by Shepherd's Bush's finest, The Who. Pete Townshend's guitar style is a DNA splice of proto-punk Link Wray's aggression, Sister Rosetta's rapid-fire picking, and Eddie Cochran's muscular strumming… John Entwistle is a Motown guy, influenced by the label's resident bass genius James Jamerson. Drummer Keith Moon is a surf music nut, and a nut in general. When he isn't putting up his dukes, singer Roger Daltrey soaks up the blues. Just like everyone else, the band's backing vocal licks are lifted from The Everly Brothers. The point is, The Who scrunched their collective influences into a tight ball and called it "Maximum R&B" for dramatic effect. Long live rock!

August 20, 1965. The Stones again. Brian Jones has been sidelined. This time Mick and Keith are in charge. The new single *[I Can't Get No] Satisfaction* is released. This isn't five kids playing at Chicago blues anymore. *Satisfaction* is riff-driven rock. The single sums up the mood of a music scene that's shifting from pastiche to innovation. All over the UK, bands are using their influences as a springboard, not a blueprint. Somewhere in London, Eric Clapton has just got his hands on an old Les Paul. 1966 is gonna be one helluva year.

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THE 25 SONGS THAT SHAPED ROCK

Casting a long shadow over the genesis of rock music in the 60s, these are the songs that inspired a whole new generation of songwriters to take up their guitars in anger…

CROSS ROAD BLUES [1937]

ROBERT JOHNSON

All the folklore BS about Robert Johnson making a deal with the Devil, keeping one step ahead of hell hounds, and dying in agony from a bottle of poisoned whiskey, well, it was killer PR. The real story was his incredible guitar playing. As Johnson disciple and Rolling Stone Keith Richards said, "It took me a long time to realise he was actually doing it all by himself." Then you've got the songs. Eric Clapton's reworking of *Cross Road Blues* with Cream [*Wheels Of Fire*, 1968] transformed Johnson's plea into a York masterpiece.

STRANGE THINGS HAPPENING EVERY DAY [1945]

SISTER ROSETTA THARPE

When gospel singer Sister Rosetta Tharpe stepped onto a disused railway station platform in Manchester on May 7, 1964, she lit a fire under the emergent British blues scene. The good sister had already been name-checked as a major influence by Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash. Now, as she performed in the rain, she blew away an audience of mods and students with the lightning fast picking and remarkable lung-shredding vocals that are all over *Strange Things Happening Every Day*.

ROCK ISLAND LINE [1955]

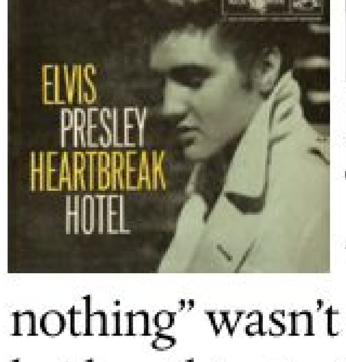
LONNIE DONEGAN

Before Lonnie Donegan, music was something adults did on trumpets and things, and kids were expected to be seen and not heard. Donegan changed all that with a breathless run through of an old Lead Belly folk tune. This is the song that put Jimmy Page on the road to rock infamy, and also sowed the seeds of The Fab Four. Sadly, Donegan died a bitter man, believing that he never got the fortune and recognition he deserved for changing the world.

TUTTI FRUTTI [1955]

LITTLE RICHARD

"A-wop-bop-a-loo-mop alop-bam-boom!" Apparently written when he was working as a janitor, Little Richard's *Tutti Frutti* is probably the most exuberant rock'n'roll performance ever captured on tape. The songs original theme of gay sex were toned down for the commercial release but it's the way that Richard delivers them that makes this 45 so influential. Beatle Paul McCartney is a disciple of course. Ditto Elton John, Billy Joel and anyone else who ever beat the shit out of a piano while screaming their tits off…



HEARTBREAK HOTEL [1956]

ELVIS PRESLEY

The oft-quoted John Lennon quip that "before Elvis, there was nothing" wasn't quite true. Like other British kids, he'd got his start thanks to skiffle. Yet, *Heartbreak Hotel*, and its blistering Scotty Moore guitar solo, did devastate teens across the UK despite its slow tempo and lyrics based around a real-life suicide. "It was almost like I'd been waiting for it to happen," said Keith Richards tellingly in his biography *Life*. "When I woke up the next day I was a different guy."

RACE WITH THE DEVIL [1956]

GENE VINCENT & HIS BLUE CAPS

Gene Vincent is his usual mean and magnificent self on *Race With The Devil* but it's guitarist Cliff Gallup that makes the track special. Gallup is a huge inspiration for Jeff Beck. His 1993 *Crazy Legs* album was a tribute to the guitarist. You can also hear Gallup's influence on *Jeff's Boogie* from the '66 Yardbirds album *Roger The Engineer*. Despite being name checked as an influence by Beck, Stray Cat Brian Setzer, and Jimmy Page, Gallup still remains an under appreciated figure in the birth of rock guitar.

SMOKESTACK LIGHTNIN' [1956]

HOWLIN' WOLF

He might have recorded the song in 1956 but Chester Burnette, Mr Howlin' Wolf, had been performing *Smokestack Lightnin'* since the early 30s. "We used to sit out in the country and see the trains go by, watch the sparks come out of the smokestack," he once revealed. "That was smokestack lightning." The '56 recording is especially stirring thanks to the opening guitar lick played by Hubert Sumlin. It was later adapted by US garage band punks The Groupies for their '66 gem *Primitive*.

TRAIN KEPT A-ROLLIN' [1956]

JOHNNY BURNETTE & THE ROCK'N'ROLL TRIO

You'll likely know this tune best as rebooted by the Jeff Beck-era Yardbirds in 1965. A year later, Jimmy Page was on board and the song was recut as *Stroll On* for the soundtrack of the movie *Blow Up*. The Johnny Burnette & The Rock'n'Roll trio 45 was itself a cover of the original 1951 recording by jump blues cat Tiny Bradshaw. The Johnny Burnette cut features the brilliant riffing of rockabilly guitarist Paul Burlison, one of the most unsung architects of the rock sound…

DIXIE FRIED [1956]

CARL PERKINS

Even amongst a roster that featured Elvis, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Charlie Feathers, Carl Perkins stood out at Sun Records. He'd written *Blue Suede Shoes*, but it was his virtuoso country guitar picking that made his such a massive influence on George Harrison. The tale of a juiced-up hoodlum, *Dixie Fried* features Perkins' toughest lyrics: *"now Dan got happy and he started raving, he jerked out his razor but he wasn't shaving…"*

THAT'LL BE THE DAY [1957]

BUDDY HOLLY

It's impossible to overstate just how important this record is. *That'll Be The Day* was the first song recorded by a pre-Fab Beatles, back when they were still kids. Bespectacled Texan Buddy Holly was proof that you didn't have to be pretty like Elvis, or a gifted guitarist like Eddie Cochran to be a rock'n'roll star. He also put the Fender Stratocaster on the map when he was pictured cradling a sunburst example on the cover of debut album *The "Chirping" Crickets*.

TWENTY FLIGHT ROCK [1957]

EDDIE COCHRAN

Featured in the hugely iconic 1956 teen movie *The Girl Can't Help It*, *Twenty Flight Rock* was released as a single the following year. The Beatles played it live often, ditto Stray Cat Brian Setzer, who based his look, sound, and love of Gretsch G6120 guitars, on Cochran. The song is basically about a guy whose girlfriend lives on the 20th floor of an apartment building where the lift is out. By the time he gets to the top he's too tired to "rock". You weren't allowed to say fuck in those days…

SWEET LITTLE ANGEL [1957]

BB KING

Sweet Little Angel was originally recorded as *Black Angel Blues* by the infamously potty-mouthed Lucille Bogan in 1930. Influenced by the title of Robert Nighthawk's version *Sweet Black Angel*, BB King cut his *Sweet Little Angel*, first in 1956, then again the following year for his debut *Singin' The Blues* album. Featuring sexually charged metaphor [*"I love the way she spreads her wings…"*] the song served as a blues masterclass for John Mayall acolytes Eric Clapton, Peter Green and Mick Taylor.

JOHNNY B GOODE [1958]

CHUCK BERRY

Mercilessly butchered by countless bar bands, *Johnny B Goode* is still the greatest guitar lesson you can get outside of a book. Thanks to his tales of teenage angst and sexual frustration, Berry was the original rock'n'roll poet laureate but it's his guitar playing that stuck in the noggins of kids in the 50s, 60s and beyond. Just think of the rock players that used Chuck as their blueprint: George Harrison, Keith Richards, Johnny Thunders, Angus Young. That's just the tip of the iceberg, baby.

RUMBLE [1958]

LINK WRAY

If you download one song by a single-lunged, Shawnee Native American, make sure it's *Rumble*. Idolised by Pete Townshend and Jimmy Page, the track was famously banned on some US radio stations despite being an instrumental. Part of that was down to the pugilistic title. The remainder was all about the filthy guitar sound. Wray pulled distortion out of his amplifier by poking holes in its speaker with a pencil. This is the sound of rock, years before we all gave it a name.

MOVE IT [1958]

CLIFF RICHARD AND THE DRIFTERS

Yeah, years before all the Eurovision and *Wired For Sound* cobblers, pop's chief God botherer and Dorian Grey wannabe scored a bonafide rock'n'roll belter. The Drifters would later be re-christened The Shadows, and it's lead guitarist and Postman Pat doppelgänger Hank Marvin who gives this track its mojo. Cliff lifted his lip-curled schtick wholesale from Elvis Presley but, like fellow Brit Billy Fury, he proved that you didn't have to come from Tennessee to sound like the real deal.

SHAKIN' ALL OVER [1960]

JOHNNY KIDD & THE PIRATES

Johnny Kidd's throbbing classic found itself amongst a whole new generation of rockers when it was covered by The Who on their 1970 *Live At Leeds* album. With all due respect to Pete and Rog, the original version is still the best. The guitar bits by Alan Caddy and lead picker Joe Moretti give the track an ominous brooding feel but the lyrics were inspired by good old fashioned lust. said composer Johnny Kidd: "When I happened to see a girl that was a real sizzler, I used to say that she gave me quivers down the membrane."

A FOOL IN LOVE [1960]

IKE AND TINA TURNER

When Tina Turner was embraced by the rock community in the 1980s, supporters like David Bowie and Mick Jagger were really repaying a huge debt. We're do you think Jagger got his stage moves and vocal histrionics? Ike and Tina had been a big influence on the rock scene throughout the 60s. For his part, Ike Turner was a supremely talented guitarist, arranger, and onetime blues talent scout. He also kept the Fender Stratocaster's profile high until Jimi Hendrix showed up.

HIDEAWAY [1960]

FREDDIE KING

One of the "Three Kings" of blues guitar, along with BB and Albert, Freddie King is a massive influence on rock. The song has been covered an estimated squillion times over the years, most significantly on the groundbreaking John Mayall's *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* 'Beano' album in 1966. The original King track was featured on his Let's Hide Away And Dance Away With Freddie King album which also contained *The Stumble*, a gem covered by Peter Green era Bluesbreakers on 67's *A Hard Road*.

THE SKY IS CRYING [1960]

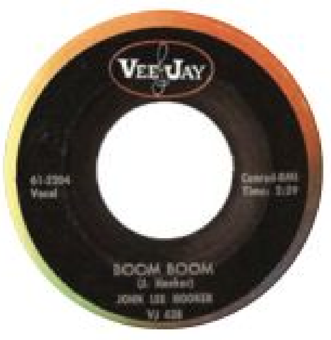
ELMORE JAMES

Covered by the likes of Eric Clapton, Gary Moore, Johnny Winter and Stevie Ray Vaughan, *The Sky Is Crying* was written and recorded by slide guitarist Elmore James. The song was also performed by The Allman Brothers at the funeral of brother Duane in 1973. James' icy cold slide on the original recording has influenced everyone from John Lennon to Derek Trucks. Although the song has a theme of lost love and regret, it was written quickly during a downpour in Chicago.

MEMPHIS [1964]

LONNIE MACK

Lonnie Mack's cut of old Chuck Berry standard *Memphis* is an essential link between blues and the 60s rock scene. It's a muscular, overdriven performance that influenced countless pickers, not least fan and amigo Stevie Ray Vaughan. Mack's other big contribution was as an advocate of the Gibson's poorly-received 1958 Flying V guitar. Sales were so bad that some stores used them as entrance signs. It would be 10 years before the hard rock faces would embrace the guitar's pointy-machine head greatness.



BOOM BOOM [1961]

JOHN LEE HOOKER

A pop and R&B crossover hit for Mr Hooker, *Boom Boom* became an essential track for aspiring Brit blues bands in the early 60s. The best known, and best full stop, cover of the song was cut by Newcastle's finest The Animals in 1964. The song was also a big influence on *LA Woman* era Doors and ZZ Top. The latter's blues monster *La Grange* is pure John Lee *Boom Boom*.

YOU NEED LOVE [1962]

MUDDY WATERS

It's been well documented that Led Zeppelin had their wicked way with some of the lyrics of *You Need Love*. They ended up in *Whole Lotta Love* of course. Muddy Waters' cut of this Willie Dixon classic also inspired a Small Faces cover *You Need Loving*. The band's singer/guitarist Steve Marriott claimed that Jimmy Page and Robert Plant were 'intrigued' by the song. Compare the vocal line of *You Need Loving* to *Whole Lotta Love* and you'll notice it wasn't just the lyrics that were lifted.

GREEN ONIONS [1962]

BOOKER T & THE MGS

Recorded by the Stax Records house band that included keyboardist Booker T Jones and guitarist Steve "The Colonel" Cropper, this Mod anthem sold more Hammond organs than 'Arrods. It was a huge influence on the Small Faces but pretty much anyone that plays rock or blues organ cites it as a game changer. Considered a throwaway tune by its composer Booker T, it features in one of the greatest unintentional comedy scenes in cinematic history: 'Ace Face' Sting dancing in 1979 Mod epic *Quadrophenia*.

YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER [1962]

BO DIDDLEY

While wily old Chuck Berry gets the lion's share of credit for inspiring generations of fledgling guitarists, Bo Diddley's contribution was every bit as crucial. A friend and mentor to ZZ Top's Billy F Gibbons, Bo also inspired John Fogerty of Creedence Clearwater Revival, The Doors, The Band, countless garage punks and, lest we forget, our old pal Keef Richards. The Bo Diddley "shave and a haircut, two bits" rhythm is the backbone of The Stones *Not Fade Away*.

LOUIE LOUIE [1963]

THE KINGSMEN

It still sounds like a load of incoherent sodding around but *Louie Louie* inspired a bunch of British proto-rock 45s by the mod fraternity. Even if the resemblance is not immediately obvious, those singles include the likes of The Who's *I Can't Explain*, The Kinks' *You Really Got Me*, plus *Whatcha Gonna Do About It* from The Small Faces. The Kingmen's '63 is notorious thanks to an FBI investigation into its supposedly x-rated lyrics. Truth is, the vocals were just lost in the mix – although the drummer apparently shouts "fuck" in the first minute.

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THE YEAR THAT BUILT ROCK

Words: **Bill DeMain**

Fifty years ago, the world changed for ever – and music was at the heart of it. Out went the squeaky-clean heroes, and in came grubbier anti-heroes who produced mindblowing new soundtracks for the lives of everyone. It was goodbye rock'n'roll, hello *rock*.

Look closely at those numbers. Change and evolution seem to be built into the very graphic shape of 1966. The first two digits pronged into the ground, stable, glancing backwards. The next two on wheels, speeding forward, reaching out and up, one like the hand of Levi Stubbs, the other the windmilling arm of Pete Townshend, pointing the way towards the future. Not just 12 months ahead, but towards where we are now, 50 years later.

1966 was the beginning, the zero hour. The end of teenyboppers and the Scream Age. The birth of serious music fans and the Ear Age. It was the big bang of everything that is celebrated by rock lovers today and by extension, this magazine. Even that word "rock" was new. Shedding its 10-year sidecar "roll", it became simultaneously more modern and open to all kinds of new sidecar possibilities – acid, folk, freak, garage, psychedelic.

Just consider a few of the still-vital innovations the 1966 rock explosion brought us: the 33 rpm album as a cohesive artistic statement, the guitar hero with the Les Paul and the Marshall stack, the rock opera, the concert light show, the artist who has not only hits but informed opinions about the world, the first live bootleg, and songs that went far beyond boy-meets-girl to explore sex and drugs, disillusion and depression, rebellion and defiance, happenings and higher consciousness. Also, songs that went beyond the de rigeur two minutes 50 seconds. There were multi-track freakouts like the screaming seagull tape loops (actually a sped-up McCartney laughing) behind the mind-bending *Tomorrow Never Knows*, and humble-but-hip experiments like the Coca-Cola bottle tapping out time behind Bobby Fuller Four's *Let Her Dance*. There was a collision and melding of musical styles and cultures – from the sitars that snaked through *Paint It Black* to the electrified John Coltrane jazz riffs channelled on *Eight Miles High*, from the fingerpicked Celtic drones of Roy Harper's *Legend* to the amped-up Tchaikovsky of The Move's *Night Of Fear* and minstrel show jug'n'jive of *Daydream*.

That Lovin' Spoonful song, the biggest hit of the summer in the UK, gave birth to *Lazy Sunday*

ALBUMS: ALAMY; BEATLES: GETTY; FACES: ALAMY

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Rain men: The Fabs were turned on to pot by Dylan, then they turned Donovan on, and on it went…

The Small Faces: before the lazy Sunday afternoons kicked in.

Afternoon by The Small Faces, *Sunny Afternoon* by The Kinks and *Good Day Sunshine* by The Beatles. That was another magical thing about 1966. Everyone was being influenced by each other, constantly upping the collective creative ante. Paul Simon lent David Crosby a female chorale album called *Music Of Bulgaria*. Cros said: "Those chicks can sing!" and borrowed some of the harmony magic for *Wild Mountain Thyme*. Dylan turned The Beatles on to pot, and The Beatles turned Donovan on and he wrote *Sunshine Superman*. The Small Faces, Spencer Davis Group, The Beatles and the Stones hung out together backstage at the *NME* Poll-Winners show. "It was euphoric," said Spencer Davis. There was a unity, a community, all about friendly competition and mutual admiration. Artists were facing the same direction – forward - and suddenly, they were tossing aside those sketchbooks with studies of past masters to create something new on a big, anything-goes canvas.

'1966 was the beginning. It was the big bang of everything.'

One of the last major releases of 1965, *Rubber Soul*, lit the fuse to it all really, introducing the game-changing idea of the album as a deeper experience than the single. Famously, *Rubber Soul* was the gauntlet thrown down before 23-year old Beach Boy Brian Wilson that inspired him to leave behind the surfboard serenades for the symphonic sound of *Pet Sounds*, the 1966 album that Andrew Loog Oldham ▷

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The Rolling Stones: stopped pretending they were living in the Mississippi Delta circa 1930.

The Velvet Underground invented the very modern idea of the cult band.

called the "equivalent of *Scheherazade*, the most progressive album of the year". But Brian wasn't the only one who benefitted from dropping the 45 rpm mentality.

Oldham's charges the Rolling Stones stopped pretending they were living in the Mississippi Delta circa 1930, and for the first time, wrote all their own songs, for *Aftermath*. Nasty songs they were too, about pill-addicted housewives, groupies and scheming hustlers, set to tough grooves that twisted the blues with marimbas, sitars and Jagger and Richards' push and pull into what we now know as the unmistakable Stones style. As Richards told *Hit Parader* in '66, "Two years ago, our sound was a mixture of Chuck Berry and Muddy Waters. We have our own sound now."

Dylan defied naysayers and crossed the cultural divide to record in Nashville with a bunch of supposedly square session cats. It turned out they shared his love for amphetamines and intuited how to make his poetry sing louder than ever before. The result was double album *Blonde On Blonde*, full of brilliance such as the dream-swirled *Visions Of Johanna* (*'Inside the museums, infinity goes up on trial'* could double as an in-with-the-new rallying call for '66) and caustic blues of *Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat*. Dylan even left some revolutionary residue behind. The janitor on those sessions, Kris Kristofferson, would run with Zimmy's lavish lyricism, mix it with country and turn Music City on its head a few years later.

The gap that Dylan left in Greenwich Village was filled on one hand by The Lovin' Spoonful, whose '66 chart run was "hotter than a match head". Across Bleecker Street was the "Cool town, evening in the city" vibe at artist Andy Warhol's Factory, where house band The Velvet Underground posed enigmatically with whip dancers and skinny models, blasting out noisy, repetitive songs about whip dancers and skinny models. They were never quite embraced like the cuddly Spoonful, but the Velvets invented the very modern idea of the cult band, that uncompromising act you either hate or adore to the exclusion of all others. And as Brian Eno said: "Their first album only sold 10,000 copies, but everyone who bought it formed a band."

> **"We want to smash everything. It's part of what's happening to us and to our audiences."**
> KEITH MOON

New York may have laid claim to being artistic capital of the world, but in '66, London was easily its equal. Beatles and Stones aside, it was home to the original and still-greatest guitar-slinging trio ever, Beck, Page and Clapton. But even with the latter's deity-like status on the rise with Mayall and Cream, he and every guitarist were about to be blown away by a freaky-looking black American lefty named Jimi making his debut at the Scotch of St James. And speaking of freaky-looking, rock stars defined their visual image with the latest fashions, and London's Carnaby Street was fashion central. It was a bustling scene where you might see Steve Marriott and Ronnie Lane checking out their slim-suited reflections in the window of John Stephen's His Clothes, or doe-eyed, androgynous Twiggy modelling her latest Mary Quant mini-dress.

Other cities were in on the revolution too. Detroit's Motown was growing restless and adventurous, with ghetto poetry and odes to racial harmony. Across town, Mitch Ryder was sowing the seeds of punk with *Devil In The Blue Dress*. And two towns over, in Saginaw, Question Mark & The Mysterians were doing the same, hand-delivering copies of the most lascivious one-hit wonder of all time, *96 Tears*. Down south, Memphis and Muscle Shoals were laying gritty groundwork with Otis Redding and Booker T. & The M.G.'s for decades of greatness. Out west, Los Angeles, always a city of light and dark, was harmony fresh with *California Dreaming* during the day, seedy with *Hungry Freaks, Daddy* at night. Up the coast in San Francisco (briefly nicknamed "Liverpool of the West" because of the burgeoning scene) experimental author Ken Kesey threw the first of his infamous LSD parties, aka "acid tests," at the Fillmore, with psychedelic rock band Jefferson Airplane supplying the fuzzed-out soundtrack. And at the hippie church known as the The Avalon, the first trippy light show projected liquid blobs across the laid-back country rock epics of the Grateful Dead.

About that Frisco drug. It opened a lot of neural pathways and inspired a lot of great tuneage in '66 – by The 13th Floor Elevators, Love and Blues Magoos. By Donovan and The Byrds. What better advertisement for the drug than *Rain* and *Tomorrow Never Knows*? Half of The Beatles' output that year could be traced to acid. *'Another road where maybe I could see another kind of mind there'* indeed. In 1966-7 alone, *Life Magazine* estimated a million doses of LSD were consumed. And it was legal for most of the year, which made Harvard doctor Timothy Leary's credo of "Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out" seem like an attractive and reasonable life approach, especially for those skipping along the greener side of the Generation Gap. That overarching idea had been around since Shakespearean times, the phrase itself since the 1920s, but in 1966, when young people discovered the doubletalk and duplicity, the hypocrisy and halitosis of the older generation, they seceded to their own island, leaving an ever-widening gulf.

"We want to smash everything; it's part of what's happening to us and to our audiences," said Keith Moon. "Never trust anyone over thirty," said Free Speech hero Jack Weinberg.

And all rock's heroes were well under that age. Jagger, Davies, Townshend, Lennon, Clapton, Joplin, Slick, Morrison. Spokesmen and women of their generation. They were bright, sincere, flippant, cynical, hopeful and candid in all the right measures. "Our generation has a lot of idealism but it's more pragmatic than romantic," Paul Simon said in '66. "This is the age of the anti-hero." Those anti-heroes inspired fans to gaze beyond cars, girls and dancing, and start thinking about deeper subjects – philosophy, politics, religion, social

MICK: GETTY; VELVET: ALAMY

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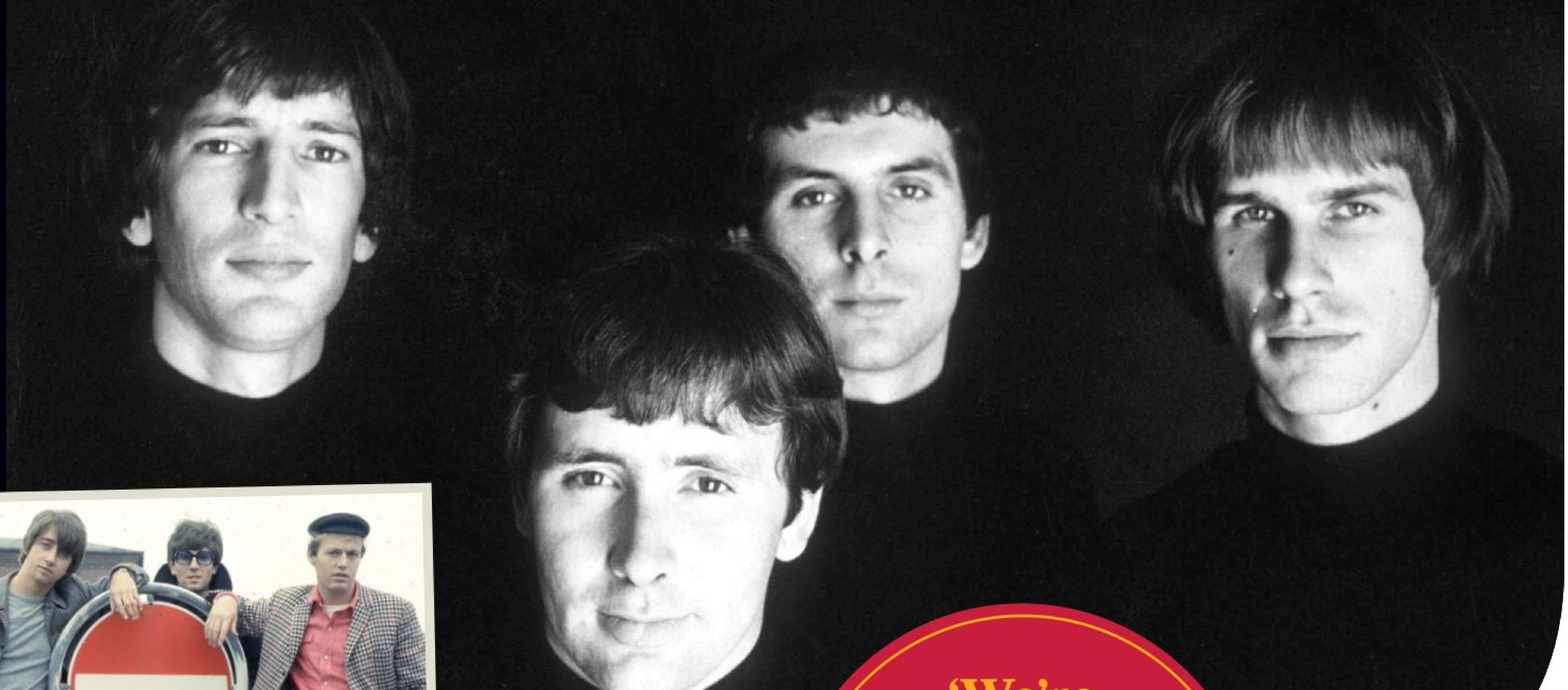


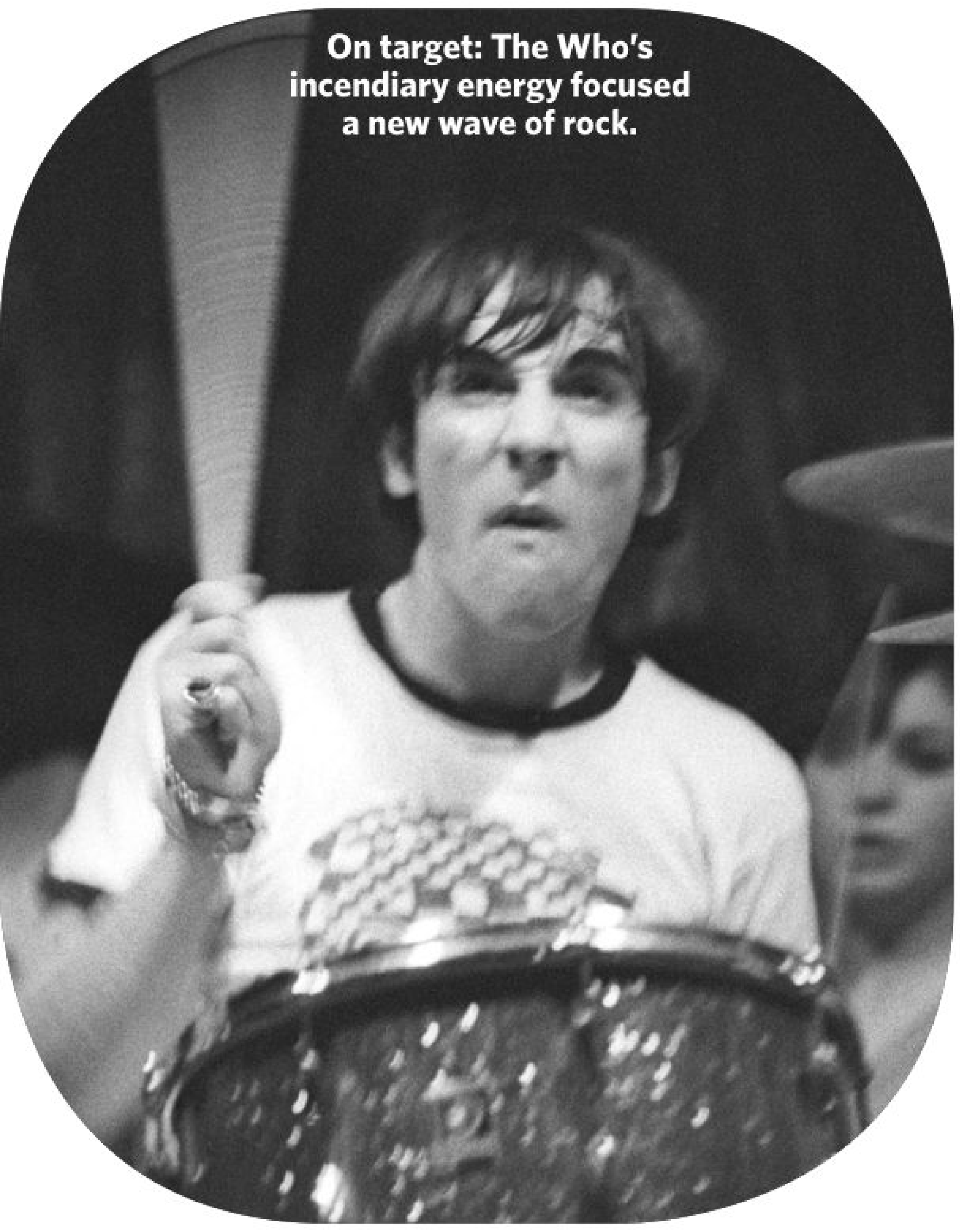
The Troggs: move over Elvis – a new Presley was on the block.

The Hollies: three Top 10 hits in '66.

change. Of course, sometimes that intelligence and candor could result in backlash, as in the American south's overreaction to Lennon's comment about how The Beatles were "more popular than Jesus Christ" (an event that single-handedly invented serious rock journalism, inspired the first serious rock journal *Crawdaddy*, and stripped the veneer from the old pop star schtick).

Jefferson Airplane's Paul Kantner really summed up the essence of the artist and fan dynamic in '66 when he said: "There's a significantly greater communication between the music itself, the people who make it, and the people who listen to it, than there was in Elvis Presley's day."

1956 to 1966. What a difference a decade made (poor Elvis was stuck in Hollywood-fluff like *Spinout*). A difference not only in music. A progressive spirit now infused everything. Truman Capote's riveting *In Cold Blood* invented the new genre of the non-fiction novel. TV's *Star Trek* boldly went promoting racial harmony with a fully integrated crew and episodes about prejudice and tolerance. Twister and Hula Hoops were international crazes, both sneaking sexual freedom into homes and backyards. Broadway and the West End tackled subjects from prostitution to Communism. Masters and Johnson explored the *Human Sexual Response*. The first artificial human heart was implanted. The first direct dial international phone calls were made without operator assistance. And the US and Russia launched satellites, dogs and monkeys into space.



On target: The Who's incendiary energy focused a new wave of rock.

Technological and economic changes contributed directly to 1966's musical progress. Multi-track recorders had been around for over a decade, but they became reliable and streamlined, giving bands four, then eight, then 16 tracks to create their masterpieces. Bigger, louder amplifiers and PA systems jacked up the wattage and excitement at concerts. Solid state technology put portable transistor radios in hands everywhere (the smartphones of their day), and a steady middle class prosperity in the US and UK gave teenagers more spending money for stereo equipment and albums. And \$4/£2.75 for an album was a bargain, considering the new release racks were teeming with discs like *Fresh Cream*, *Sounds Of Silence*, *The Seeds* and *I Fought The Law*. And the rise of regional indie labels not only gave the latter two purchase on that rack next to major label releases, but forecast how things would look in our future.

Of course, there'd be no 1966 rock – or 2016 rock, for that matter – without the blues. We mentioned the Stones, but this was the year when many bands stopped merely imitating Howlin' Wolf and Skip James (those two legends both found new audiences in Britain), and discovered ways to transcend the blues. On The Spiders' *Don't Blow Your Mind*, teenage Alice Cooper threw the 12-bar form down a deep well, then yowled up from the bottom in the midst of a fuzz-bass thunderstorm. On *Wild Thing*, The Troggs lived up to their name by banging a savage caveman sensibility into the catchiest I-IV-V workout ever. Then there was *Shapes Of Things*. Next to *Tomorrow Never Knows*, it may be the most forward-looking song of the year. Pro-environment and anti-war lyrics, a bass riff borrowed from a Dave Brubeck jazz record, a martial beat, abrupt tempo shifts, all capped off with Jeff Beck's free-form feedback solo.

'We're still trying to live up to the greatness and promise of 1966.'

If there's one word that sums up 1966, it's 'free'. Jimi Hendrix said: "We don't want to be classed in any category. If it must have a tag, I'd like it to be called 'Free Feeling'. It's a mixture of rock, freak-out, blues and rave music." Frank Zappa said: "We play the new free music – music as absolutely free, unencumbered by American cultural suppression. We are systematically trying to do away with the creative roadblocks that our helpful educational system has installed to make sure nothing creative leaks through to mass audiences." And John Sebastian said: "As the various categories of popular music break down and mulch, there are what the clerical onlooker calls 'new sounds'. They are more accurately old new sounds, new old sounds, a free exchange."

The relentless stream of free, new old brilliance continued right through December, a month that unleashed parting shots of Buffalo Springfield and The Hollies' *For Certain Because*. 1967 would grab the relay baton, though it soon ran into a cul-de-sac of too much excess – drugged-out preciousness, 20-minute jams, beads and patchouli. Blech. But as rock moved out of the 60s, matured and glanced in the rearview mirror, it would become clearer that of all years, 1966 remained the one. An example of what's possible, something to reach for.

Of course, there've been many great years since: 1973, 1977, 1979, 1991, to name a few. But let's face it, we're still trying to live up to the greatness and the promise of 1966. If a band today makes a record as inventive as, say, *Sunshine Superman*, it will likely be hailed as a five-star masterpiece. Whereas in '66, it was just another great record.

As we turn the pages to celebrate the watershed and wheels of 1966, it only seems right to give the last word to the Man of the Year: "Turn off your mind, relax and float down stream, it is not dying, it is not dying." ❼

KEITH & HOLLIES: GETTY; TROGGS: GETTY

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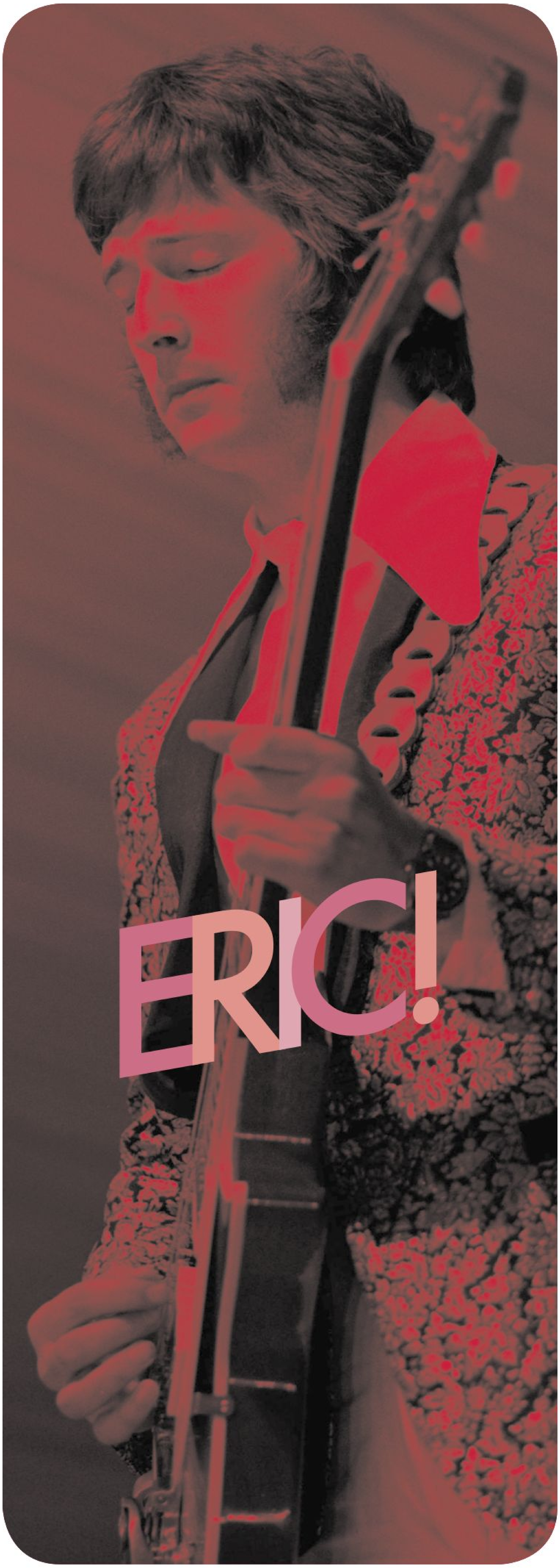

CLAPTON: GETTY; BECK & GREEN: ALAMY; PAGE: PHOTOSHOT

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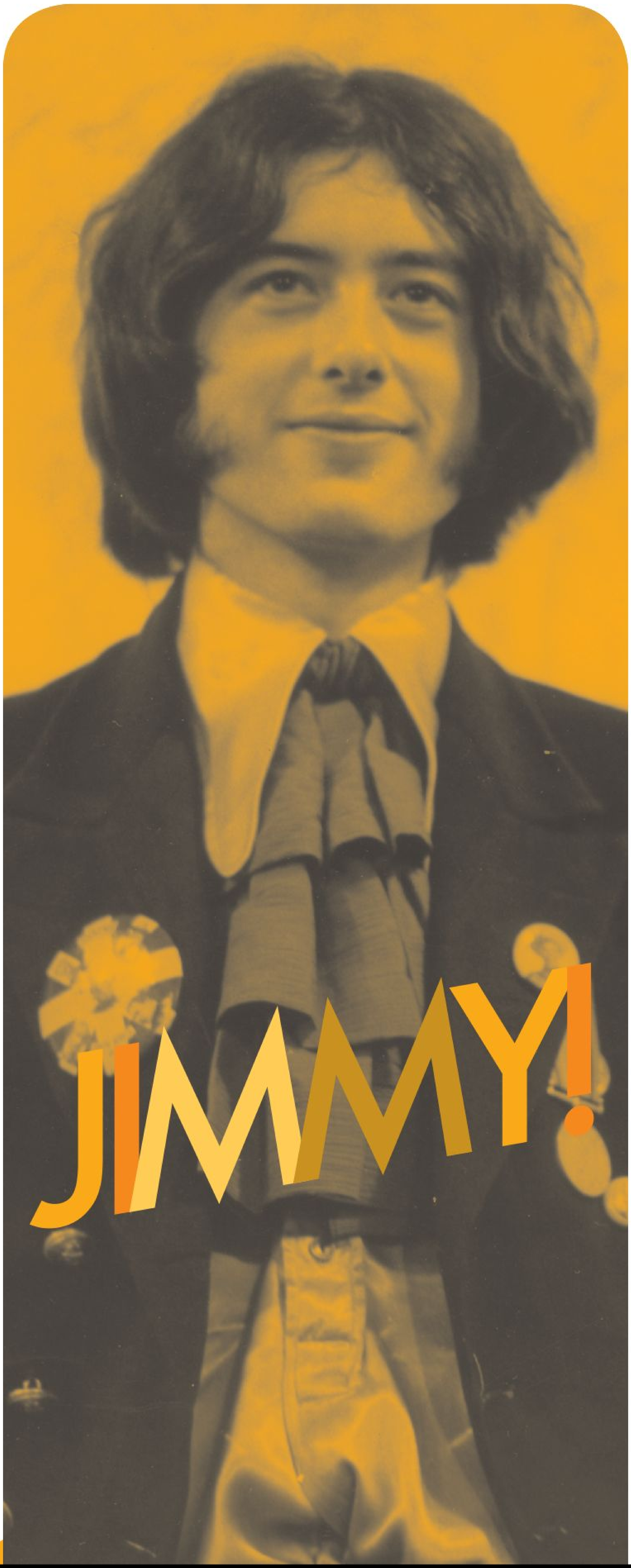

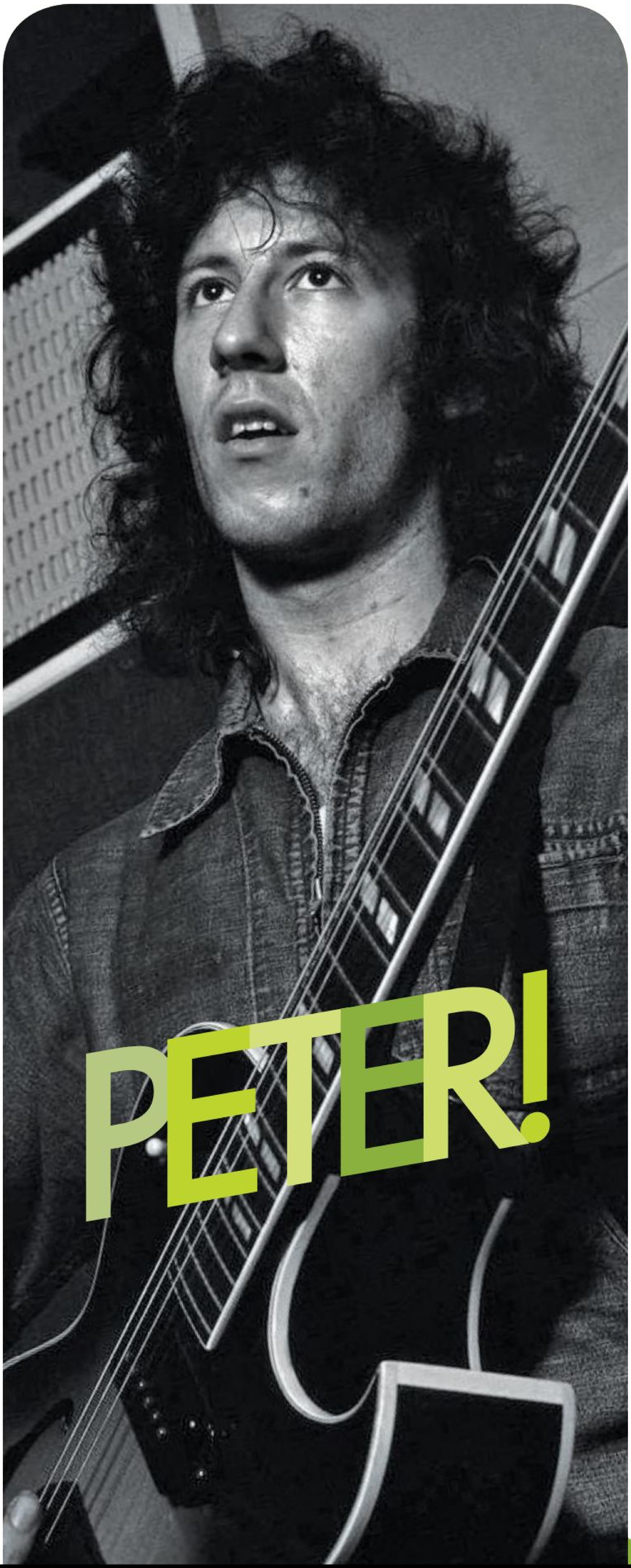

Words: **David Sinclair**

Before 1966, the blues was tired, worn out and unsexy. But then four British six-string geniuses helped birth blues rock – and created the modern guitar hero in the process. It was the start of a musical revolution.

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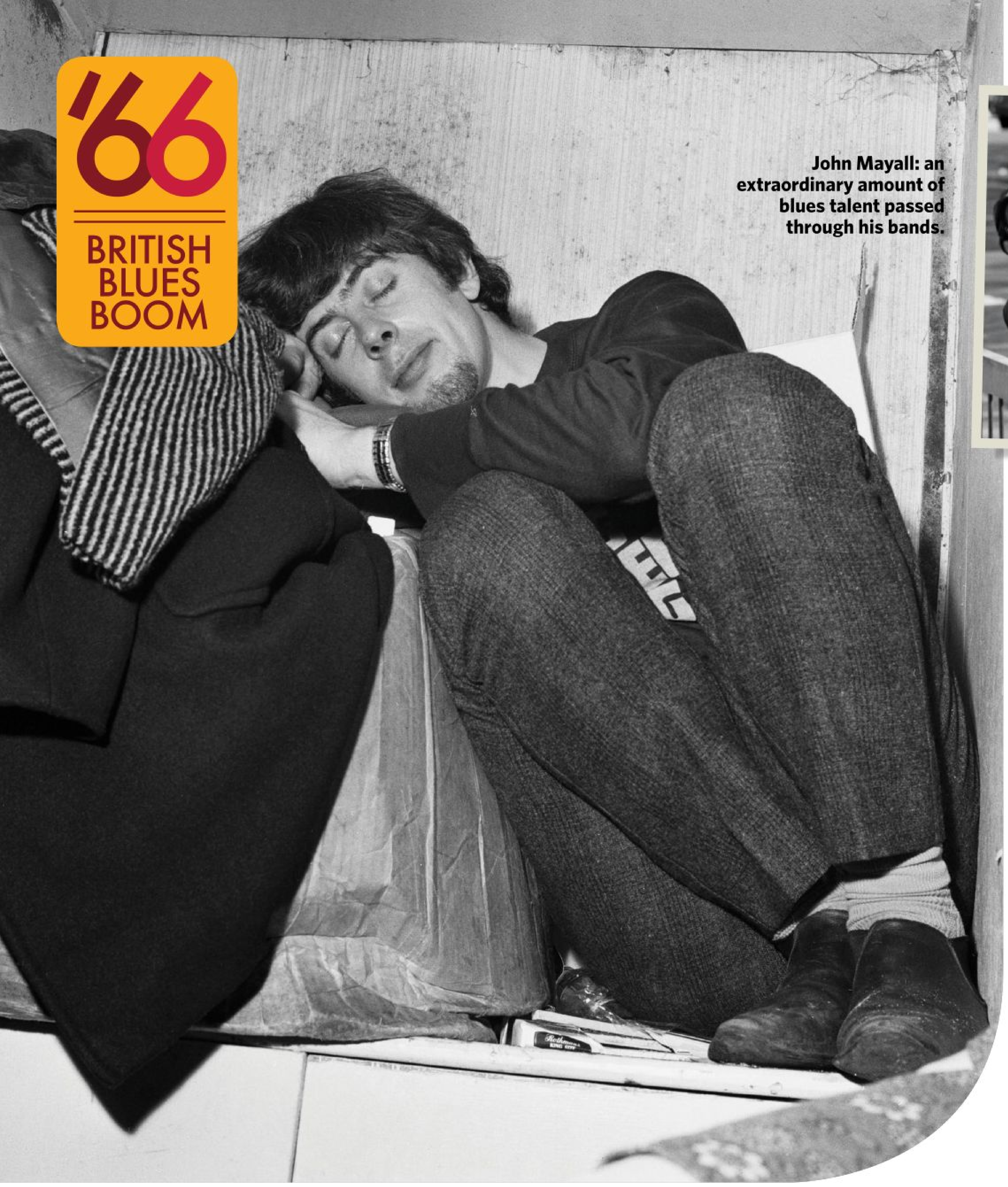
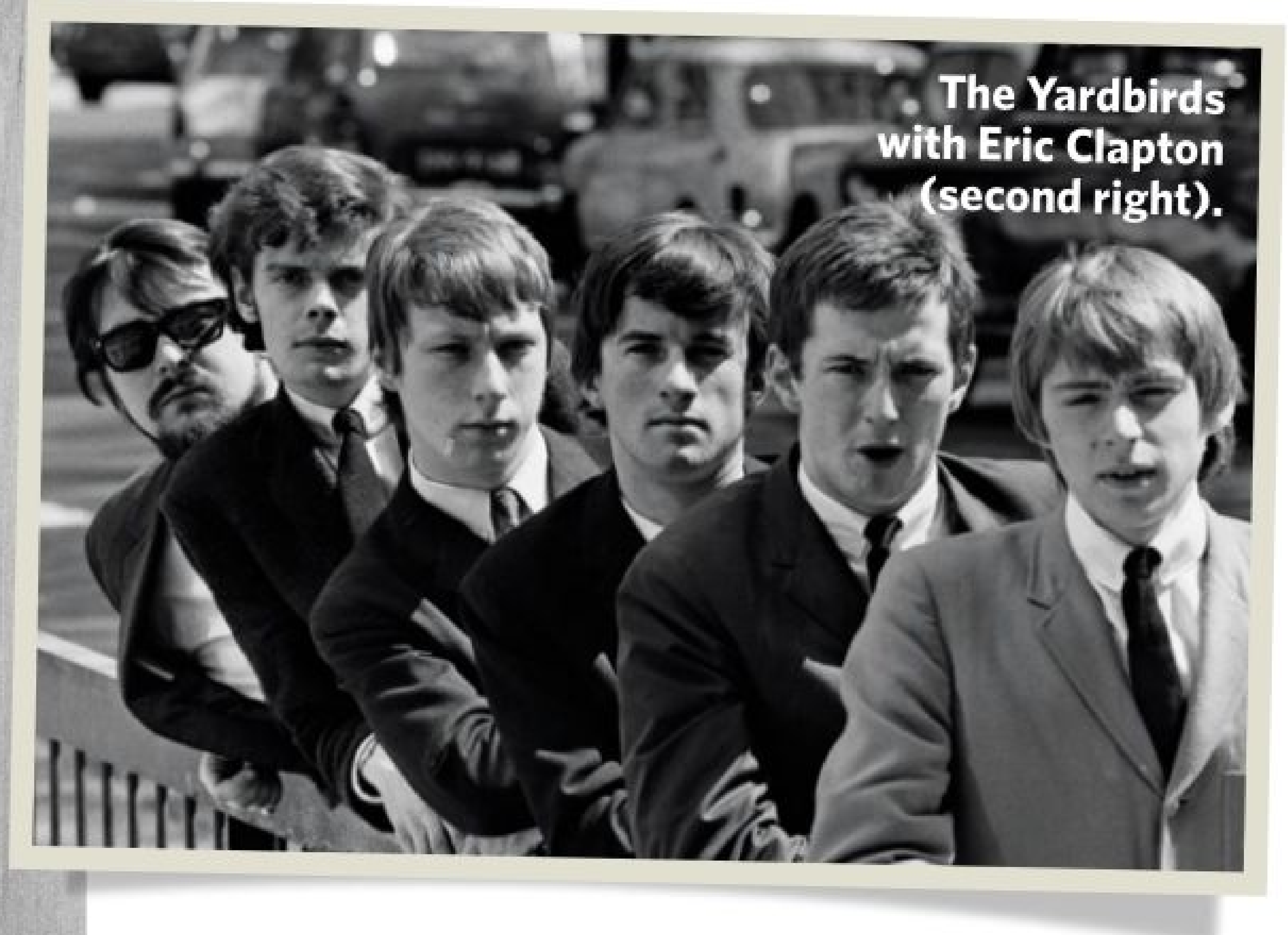


John Mayall: an extraordinary amount of blues talent passed through his bands.



The Yardbirds with Eric Clapton (second right).

1966 was the year the guitar hero was born. It was the year that Eric Clapton, aged 21, recorded the landmark Beano Album with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and then walked away to form Cream; the year that Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page, both aged 22, ended up smashing guitars and bashing through sonic barriers together in The Yardbirds; the year that marked the arrival of 19-year-old wunderkind Peter Green and a game-changing 24-year-old named Jimi Hendrix. It was, in short, the year when a new generation of guitar giants transformed the American deep blues songbook into a new strand of rock music.

Things were happening at a grass roots level too. The British R&B/blues circuit was a hothouse for new musical talent, many of them the stars of the future. Steampacket featuring Rod Stewart, Julie Driscoll and Long John Baldry, an amazing triumvirate of singers, along with the organist Brian Auger, was one such band. Ten Years After, boasting the speed-king Alvin Lee, Chicken Shack with the wiry blues warrior Stan Webb, and The Paramounts with apprentice guitar hero Robin Trower criss-crossed the country in their Commer van, playing a network of clubs, bars and town halls that stretched from the Club A'Gogo in Newcastle to the Florida Rooms in Brighton.

"There was an underground feeling in the air," John Mayall says of the period just before the Beano Album came out on July 22. "The people in the clubs were flocking to see us, regardless of what was happening in the record business or the pop charts. We were playing to capacity crowds, six or seven nights a week, everywhere we went. So we figured something was about to happen."

And happen it did.

The electric guitar has always been part of the British pop dream. At the start of the 1960s, the immaculately groomed Hank Marvin and the Shadows, with their gleaming red Stratocasters, gave way to a wilder breed of player with the arrival of Keith Richards and Brian Jones. The Rolling Stones themselves had been mentored at the outset by the bandleader/guitarist Alexis Korner and harmonica player Cyril Davies, who had introduced the blues to jazz audiences when they formed Blues Incorporated in 1961. The players who passed through the line-up of this loose collective included Jack Bruce, Ginger Baker and Charlie Watts, while those who made guest appearances with the band on their regular Rhythm and Blues Nights at the Ealing Jazz Club included Mick Jagger, Mayall and Page.

By the start of 1966, Korner was about to wrap up Blues Incorporated and – at the grand old age of 38 – embrace his well-earned status as an elder statesman of the R&B scene he had done so much to inspire. All around him his protégés were flourishing. In the pop charts the Stones were second only to The Beatles, while R&B-influenced bands such as The Animals from Newcastle and the Spencer Davis Group from Birmingham were dominating the airwaves on the ever-more popular pirate radio stations.

Foremost among the British blues pioneers who had followed the Stones into the world of pop stardom were The Yardbirds. Their album *Five Live Yardbirds*, released in December 1964, was an early prototype of the blues rock genre, thanks to the advanced musicianship of the band, and in particular that of its young lead guitarist, Eric Clapton. Although poorly recorded, the album's wild-eyed versions of *Smokestack Lightning*, *I'm A Man* and others provided a template for the instrumental wig-outs that two years later would become the stock-in-trade of Cream and many other groups that emerged in their wake.

Clapton's tenure with The Yardbirds ended abruptly in March 1965 when he deemed the group's first hit single, *For Your Love*, to be insufficiently bluesworthy for him to be associated with. He was replaced by Jeff Beck, another supremely gifted guitarist with a similar art school background and fascination for the blues, but a more mercurial and experimental nature.

By the start of 1966, The Yardbirds had already travelled a long way from their blues beginnings. In February, they released the pivotal single *Shapes Of Things*. With its bold, philosophical lyric and Beck's heavily distorted guitar solo, it found them exploring new frontiers of psychedelic pageantry. "We were all on the threshold of this new thing," Beck later said. "The Yardbirds were the very first psychedelic band, really."

But back in the clubs, bars, town halls, student unions and speakeasys of the UK, Alexis Korner's legacy was clearly in evidence. There, a dedicated cadre of young musicians immersed in the history and artistry of the blues played to fans rammed into smoke-filled rooms who spread the gospel further afield with every day that passed. Like a gathering storm, the blues was about to break.

"It all happened very quickly," recalls Mayall, who had relocated from his native Manchester to London, and by the start of 1966 had taken over from Korner as the torchbearer of modern blues in Britain. "British audiences had been listening to trad jazz for ten years, and a new generation was ready for something new. There was a really great energy that suddenly came about."

Nowhere was that energy more concentrated than in the latest line-up of Mayall's Bluesbreakers that featured John McVie on bass, Hughie Flint on drums and Eric Clapton on guitar, who Mayall had snapped up as soon as he'd left The Yardbirds.

On January 1, 1966 the Bluesbreakers saw in the New Year playing an all-nighter at the Flamingo in Soho, the first date on a gig sheet that already

MAYALL: ALAMY; YARDBIRDS AND WALKER: GETTY

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stretched ahead with few breaks into the months ahead. The Flamingo, a basement club in Wardour Street, was run by brothers Rik and Johnny Gunnell. Rik, an ex-boxer and bouncer, was also Mayall's booking agent, and the venue was a colourful R&B mecca – "semi-dubious", according to Mayall – where gangsters and prostitutes rubbed shoulders with jazz and blues musicians.

"Everybody knew everybody, because we were all playing the same circuit," Mayall says. "Everybody was all part of one big family, if you will. We were all really surprised to discover that we could actually earn a living out of this music."

For Mayall it was all about playing live and keeping together a band that could handle the workload. "The club scene was rolling for everybody," he recalls. "There was so much work going on. There was enough for everybody."

The bigger bands had a driver but there was no road crew. Drummer Aynsley Dunbar, who joined the Bluesbreakers in September 1966, remembers it as a time when road and vehicle safety were not the best, when nobody wore seatbelts and a new law prohibiting drinking and driving was passed in January 1966 but it was rarely enforced.

"I couldn't sleep when I was being driven," Dunbar recalls. "There were so many drivers around who'd had a drink or were too tired, and there were a lot of crashes so, over the years, I used to do a lot of the driving myself. I loved it! My average speed was always a hundred miles per hour or a bit more. We had some near misses."

When the band got to the gig they would have to unload and set up the gear themselves. Mayall's equipment included a Hammond organ that took some manhandling. "I fashioned some wooden handles and fixed it up like a sedan chair with a couple of poles running through the organ," Mayall explains. "Two guys could navigate most of the venues like that, whether it was down to the basement at the Flamingo or up a flight of stairs in some cases."

"Eric wanted to play the blues, and I provided a platform on which he could develop that."
JOHN MAYALL

Mayall's first album, *John Mayall Plays John Mayall*, released on Decca in 1965, had sold less than 1,000 copies and he had accordingly been dropped from the label. A succession of singles fared even worse, and it was only thanks to the persistent lobbying of producer Mike Vernon that Decca countenanced recording and releasing the Beano Album.

No one in the business was expecting the thunderbolt that arrived in the summer of '66. But Clapton's street reputation was already a phenomenon, and at least one tastemaker with a spray can had declared 'Clapton Is God' on a wall in Islington, North London. It was a measure of the young guitarist's charisma and ability that such an outrageous tag stuck. And it was a measure of the brilliance of the album, formally titled *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* – but known as the Beano Album after the comic that Clapton can be seen reading with effortlessly cool insouciance on the cover – that it exceeded all precedents, nevermind expectations.

The Beano Album raised the bar in modern recorded music overnight. From the opening notes of *All Your Love*, in which Clapton's distinctive vibrato and steely tone slice through the mix like a guillotine, the sound and performances on the album were – and still are – superlative. The combination of Clapton's Les Paul and an overdriven Marshall amp became the new template for a cool electric guitar sound and one that has rarely been bettered in the 50 years since.

"Eric's contribution was quite phenomenal," Mayall says. "He was the best there was. He wanted to play the blues and I provided a platform on which he could develop that." ▷

ANARCHY ON THE HIGH SEAS

The unstoppable rise of pirate radio.

1966 was the peak of pirate radio – the seaborne broadcasting revolution that saw radio stations anchored in international waters meet British youth's demand for 24-hour pop radio just as rock'n'roll was coming of age. A young Johnnie Walker, then a car salesman, began the year as one of many frustrated listeners, and ended it as a DJ star of the scene.

"Pirate radio had to happen," he says. "The BBC would only play a few hours of pop music a week, only at weekends, and even then they wouldn't play records longer than three minutes or so – they refused to play *House Of The Rising Sun* or *Like A Rolling Stone*, for instance.

"Ronan O'Rahilly, who started Radio Caroline, couldn't get acts he managed, like Georgie Fame and Alexis Korner, on the radio at all, so he set up his own station at sea. It really took off, and several others followed suit.

"It was a completely different way of broadcasting – anarchic, unscripted. Nobody had ever heard the like of it. And young people really responded to it. I read about this new station, 'Swinging' Radio England, in the papers, and I sent them a tape. They liked it and I went straight on the air, despite the fact I had barely any broadcasting experience.

"When I got to the ship, I found they'd built it so fast there were no bunks – we had to sleep on the floor. And the North Sea could be pretty rough so it got pretty scary at times. It wasn't like [2009 Richard Curtis comedy film] *The Boat That Rocked* – we didn't have a bar, and women were officially forbidden on board.

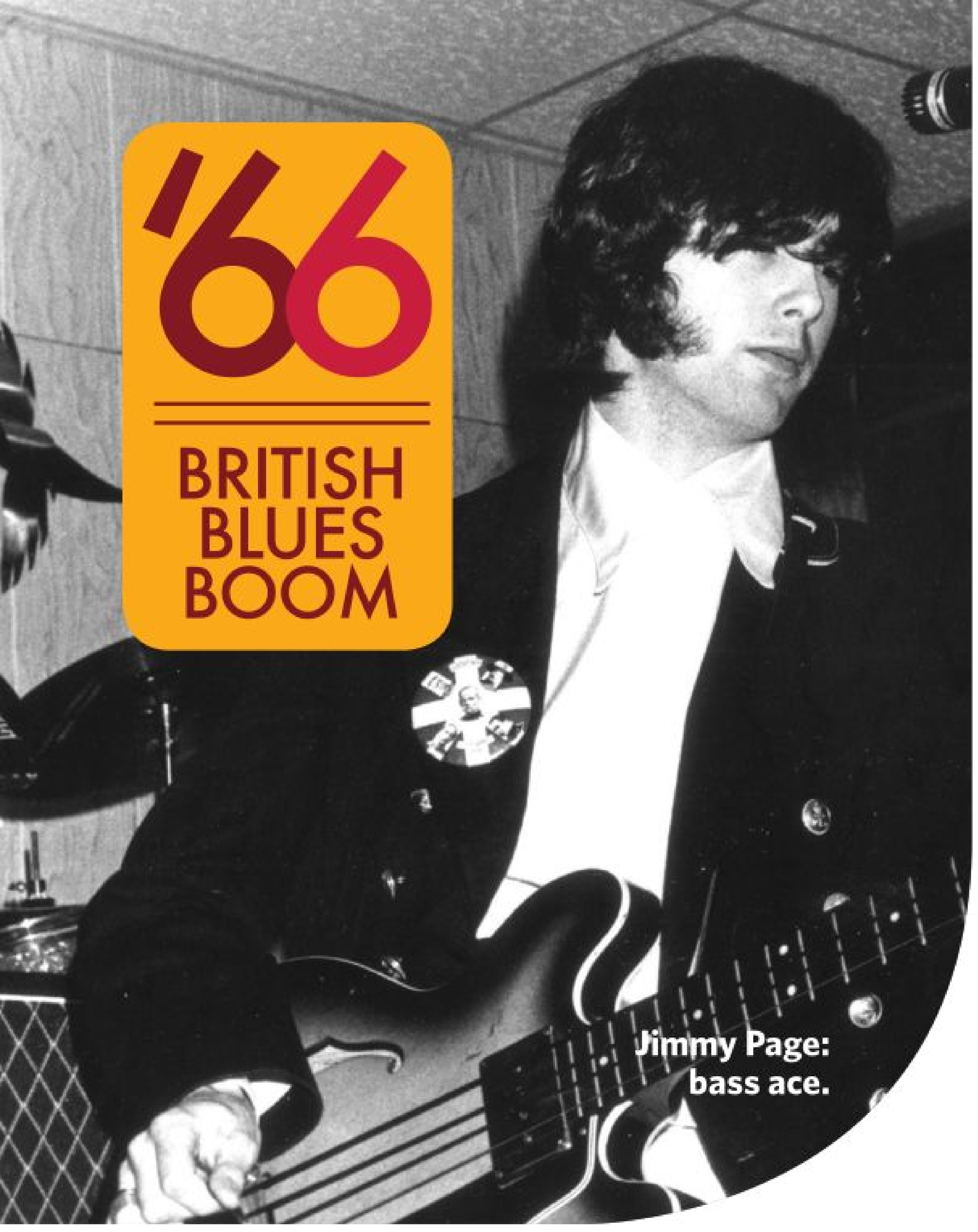
"People would sit on the beach or in their cars and listen, and we could see them from the ship, so on my show we had this thing called 'Frinton Flashers', where I would communicate with listeners by asking them to flash their headlights in response to my questions. We used to set up dates between them and all sorts.

"The government and the record companies were dead against the whole idea of commercial radio. Sir Joseph Lockwood, head of EMI, thought if radio stations played records all day long, people wouldn't go out and buy them. So he was always pressuring the government to ban us. Yet at the same time, EMI's pluggers were rushing round to the pirate stations' offices with half a dozen copies of every record.

"We had a lot of public support up to the summer of 1966, but the Calvert thing [when pirate station investor Reg Calvert was shot dead at his Essex home by rival pirate radio boss Oliver Smedley] was the beginning of the end. It gave the government more excuses to legislate against us.

"Yet even after The Marine Offences Act was passed in the summer of '67, we [at Radio Caroline] carried on for the best part of a year. Naively, I thought we would win and they'd make us legal. But I totally underestimated the impact Radio One would have. They launched in October sixty-seven, and they had a signal so strong that we couldn't compete with. And ultimately the station couldn't attract the advertising it needed to survive. But pirate radio had to happen – and all the sixties bands were enormously grateful to it."

Shipshape: Johnnie Walker (left) in his Radio Caroline days.



Jimmy Page: bass ace.

Mayall's own routines on the harmonica-driven tracks *Parchman Farm* and *Another Man* were no less remarkable for their raw, gutbucket energy, while his howling vocal call on the Mayall/Clapton composition *Double Crossing Time* echoed the ghosts of blues singers down the years.

More than just a stunning blues collection, the Beano Album was the first de facto rock album. It featured nothing so commerical as a hit single, yet it reached No.6 in the UK. Its unexpected yet emphatic success was a key moment in the process whereby albums started to take over from singles as the barometer of a band's success. With its revolutionary sound, its reverence for the nuances of electric Chicago blues, its spiritual vigour and technical rigour, the impact of the album was seismic. A generation of guitarists had just received the wake-up call of their careers, and within a year the British Blues Boom would be in full swing.

For Mayall it was simply business as usual. "The record business was something we had no control over," he says matter-of-factly. "But we did have control over getting our weekly quota of shows. The main focus for me was to keep the band together – or some line-up of the band – so that we could continue to go out and play."

For Clapton, however, the Beano Album was instant history. By the time it was released he had already left the Bluesbreakers. Things happen fast when an art form is at a pivotal stage of its development, and Clapton was a young man driven by the same urgency of feeling that you could hear in his playing. On July 30, the day that England won the football World Cup, and just eight days after the Beano Album was released, Clapton, Bruce and Baker played their first gig together as Cream at the Twisted Wheel in Manchester.

Bruce had played with Clapton in the Bluesbreakers for a stretch the previous year, and on one occasion Baker had sat in. "That was when Eric, Jack and Ginger got talking in dark corners about their own futures," says Mayall, who was remarkably unfazed at the prospect of having to carry on gigging without the star of an album that had just reached the Top 10. "For me it's never been a problem," he says. "Somehow or other I'm always able to find somebody else and make a different band."

Clapton's replacement was Peter Green, another blues prodigy from East London, who had deputised for Clapton in the past. "It took me a while to talk him into it," Mayall recalls. "He'd been offered a job to tour America with The Animals. But in the end the music won out. He decided he'd rather play blues than go off to the States."

In September, Hughie Flint also called it quits and Mayall was now on the lookout for a new drummer. He spotted Aynsley Dunbar playing a gig with Alexis Korner at a venue called Les Cousins in Wardour Street, and invited him to come and check out the Bluesbreakers a couple of days later at a gig at Chelsea Town Hall.

"They came on stage and Peter Green started with three notes and I just fell in love with the band right there and then," Dunbar recalls. "His playing was just so soulful. It wrenched me apart. I couldn't wait to play with them."

He didn't have to. Mayall instructed him to report for duty the following day and the drummer played his first gig as a member of the Bluesbreakers at Norwich Town Hall that night. He played six or seven gigs a week for the next six months. "There were no rehearsals," Dunbar recalls. "All rehearsals were done on stage in front of an audience – or you might get a run through before doing a take in the recording studio."

There was also the small matter of recording the band's next album, *A Hard Road*, which was completed over four days in October 1966 at Decca Studios in West Hampstead. As with the Beano Album before it, *A Hard Road* was a showcase for the band's new guitarist.

While Clapton, Beck and Page shared similar backgrounds, Peter Green was unlike any of them, indeed unlike anyone else on the scene. A quiet, contemplative man from a Jewish family, he took up the guitar after he first saw Clapton, whom he idolised, playing in The Yardbirds. Where Clapton (and Beck's) playing was driven by an insistent, aggressive urgency, Green's playing (and singing) style had a more emotional elegance that tapped into the mournful quality of the deepest blues.

Green's instrumental composition, *The Supernatural*, built around a single, spine-tingling sustained note, was one of the most haunting pieces that Mayall ever recorded. And *Out Of Reach*, an achingly sad song composed and sung by Green (not on the original album, but released as a Mayall B-side around the same time), was simply one of the most soulful recorded performances by any blues act of this era.

"I can say without hesitation that Peter Green was the most brilliant musician I have ever played with," said Mick Fleetwood, who played drums in the Bluesbreakers after Dunbar left in 1967 and later formed Fleetwood Mac with Green. "He could be running through a blues progression we all knew, one that we'd heard a million times, but when Peter played it those same old notes sounded brand new."

While Green was recording *A Hard Road*, and Clapton was gigging and recording his debut album with Cream, the era's two other great guitarists were about to be immortalised on the big screen. Between October 12 and 14, The Yardbirds were at Elstree Studios, where the Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni was making his film *Blow-Up*, a murder mystery-cum-social snapshot of Swinging London. The script called for a cameo from a rock group who would sum up the nihilistic, countercultural energy that was rippling through the capital's musical psyche in 1966, and The Yardbirds were it.

It had already been a turbulent year for The Yardbirds, whose bassist Paul Samwell-Smith had left the group in June and been replaced by session guitarist Jimmy Page. Page and Beck had known each other since they were teenagers, and enjoyed a lively relationship delicately balanced between

Jeff Beck: played it loud, and got a taste for smashing up guitars.

PAGE: GETTY; BECK: REX

Jimi Hendrix: put the wind up the British guitar hotshots in the 60s.

The Yardbirds with Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page.

respect and rivalry. Page was never going to be anyone's bass player for long, and switched to guitar the first chance he got.

The new line-up (with Chris Dreja on bass) had just finished a tour with the Rolling Stones and Ike and Tina Turner when they got the *Blow-Up* gig. Antonioni filmed them playing *Stroll On*, a rocked-up version of an old American jump-blues song *Train Kept A-Rolling*, on a stage set that replicated the Ricky Tick Club (actually in Windsor rather than the capital) in every detail, right down to the chewing-gum on the chairs.

"Antonioni was an awkward bastard," Beck later recalled. "He says to me: [adopts Italian accent] 'We want you to break your guitar.' I said: 'Oh yeah? A 1954 Les Paul and you want me to smash it? Get away.' He said: 'Don't be ridiculous, we pay for it.' I said: 'You can't replace that.' So then they got Höfner to bring down these shitty guitars. So I had this tea-chest full of these twenty-five-quid joke guitars. They were just destined to be smashed, and I went right through 'em three or four at a time with this Höfner rep standing watching at the side. He thought it was all great fun."

This was a good day's work for The Yardbirds. *Blow-Up* was hailed as a masterpiece and became one of the biggest-grossing films of the year in America. As a means of rubber-stamping the concept of the British guitar hero for an international audience it could hardly have been bettered. But according to the band's manager, Simon Napier-Bell, the experience of making the film gave Beck a taste for smashing up equipment on stage during the group's ensuing US tour, which proved destructive in other ways.

"Gig after gig he tottered round the stage, ramming the neck of his guitar through the speakers and crashing his feet into the delicate electrical controls. I was left a prisoner in my suite at the Chicago Hilton, phoning round America trying to find the location of every Marshall amp in the country and chartering planes to fly them to the next evening's gig, only to be destroyed by another night's bad-tempered Beck-ing."

The expenses mounted, and relations between Beck and the rest of the band soured until, three-quarters of the way through the tour, Beck left the group, pleading "inflamed brain, inflamed tonsils and an inflamed cock".

Beck was duly booted out of the group in November. Page took over and began a process of ramping up the grandstanding performance elements with a violin bow during increasingly extended solos, and laying the foundations for the his next band, the New Yardbirds. Within two years he had changed their name, and Led Zeppelin were born.

HENDRIX: ALAMY; YARDBIRDS: REX

The emergence of the Thames-delta guitar hero as an icon of popular culture was almost complete when the most exotic creature of all landed in their midst. Jimi Hendrix arrived unknown and unheralded in London on September 24. With the help of his manager Chas Chandler, he began sitting in with just about every band in town – including the Bluesbreakers and Cream – while recruiting an English rhythm section to be his band. Dunbar was one of the drummers who auditioned for him.

"We were perfect together," Dunbar says of this encounter with Hendrix. "Later, when I had my own band [the Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation] Hendrix would jump on stage and play with us every time we played at the Speakeasy. One night, he just poked his guitar through the ceiling."

Be that as it may, Dunbar didn't get the job with the Experience. The story goes that Hendrix and Chandler tossed a coin to choose between Dunbar and the man who got the job, Mitch Mitchell.

"I've got to clarify that," Dunbar now insists. "They were offering me twenty pounds a week to play with Jimi. I said: 'Give me thirty a week and I'll be there.' It wasn't a toss of a coin. They were just trying to be cheap."

Presumably Dunbar was making more than £20 a week playing with the Bluesbreakers. According to Napier-Bell, bands such as The Yardbirds and The Who could command a fee in the UK in 1966 of £350 a night (about £4,500 in today's money). Setting the gold standard, the Stones would go out for a fee of £450 (£5,800) and The Beatles – who played their last live concert, at San Francisco's Candlestick Park in August '66 – would have been charging "around a thousand pounds" (£13,000).

A year of freewheeling creativity ended with two of the most significant rock releases of the decade. The Jimi Hendrix Experience's debut single reached the shops on December 16. Hendrix's cover version of the old murder ballad *Hey Joe* and its B-side *Stone Free* was a harbinger of a revolution to come. Released a week earlier, Cream's debut album, *Fresh Cream*, was a game changer in much the same way that the Beano Album had been six months previously. Applying a skill-set that was more akin to that of the great jazz improvisers than to pop musicians, Clapton, Bruce and Baker made an incredible opening statement, full of mind-bending harmony vocals and unprecedentedly extravagant soloing on guitar, harmonica and drums. Blues rumbles such as Willie Dixon's *Spoonful* and Skip James's *I'm So Glad* were turned into monumental instrumental workouts, while original compositions such as *N.S.U.* and *Sweet Wine* redefined the parameters of a rock genre that had only just been defined in the first place. It was an astonishing album with which to bring the curtain down on a year during which the skill of the guitarist had for the first time been elevated above the appeal of the singer, and the skill and daring of one guitarist in particular – Clapton – had been elevated above that of all others.

> "When Peter Green played, those same old notes we'd heard a million times sound brand new."
> MICK FLEETWOOD

The past is another country, and half-a-century ago is a very different place indeed. Yet Mayall, now 82 and living in LA, is still making albums and still touring relentlessly. Would he consider reconvening the Beano line-up for a reunion?

"I saw Hughie not so long ago. He came to one of our gigs and it was just like old times," Mayall says. "And I've got John McVie's number. But I wouldn't have any idea how to contact Eric. How would I get in touch with him?"

Over to you, Eric… ❼

Simon Napier-Bell's You Don't Have To Say You Love Me is published by Ebury.

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...AND THEN GOD CREATED THE GUITAR HERO

In 1966 **Eric Clapton** recorded the Beano album. Guitar playing would never be the same again.

WORDS: **HARRY SHAPIRO**
PORTRAITS: **DAVID WEDGBURY**

Summer 1965. An Immediate records session at Decca studios, 165 Broadhurst Gardens, north-west London. Men wearing white lab coats over shirts and ties, their hair neatly trimmed, stand mouths agape.

In the past, perhaps, they had shared a chuckle after telling a bassoon player to quieten down or tutted, recalling that time when the dials quivered in response to an over-enthusiastic triangle player. Today the volume is such that cakes are rolling off their plates, tea cups rattling in their saucers.

Suddenly the engineer in charge comes to his senses and turns off the tape. "This guitarist is unrecordable!" he tells the producer, a young long hair by the name of Jimmy Page.

Page remains calm. A guitarist himself, he already has an impressive track record of session work behind him and, as a young man in touch with the nation's youth, has been entrusted to deliver a new kind of record.

The guitarist on the other side of the control room glass is a 20-year-old guy called Eric Clapton. He has plugged an imported, US-made Gibson Les Paul into an amp made by a new British company called Marshall. The sound is like nothing the engineers have had to deal with. They can't believe that Clapton is creating this *noise* on purpose. Page, on the other hand, understands completely.

"Switch it back on," he tells the engineer. "I'll take full responsibility..."

Just weeks earlier, in March '65, Clapton had made a career move that everybody thought was bonkers. Just as his then band The Yardbirds finally landed themselves a hit single, he quit. Yet it was equally obvious to anybody who actually knew Eric that the split, based on 'musical differences', was inevitable. When it came to the blues, Eric was musical and the rest of The Yardbirds, in his view, were cosmically different.

Mike Vernon was a staff producer at Decca Records, and a blues enthusiast who ran a magazine called *R&B Monthly* with his brother Richard and another blues fan, Neil Slaven. Mike was a regular at Yardbirds gigs in south London.

"It was very much a 'band sound'," he recalls. "Choppy guitars, crisp but mundane harmonica, not stand-out vocals, but the band had a great groove and the young kids really liked it. But they never played a slow blues until [singer] Keith Relf started to suffer with asthma and sometimes he was unable to play the second set, so other people would get up and sing, like Hogsnort Rupert, Rod Stewart and Ronnie Jones. Even I got up a couple of times, and I couldn't sing for toffee. Eric would say: 'Oh man, I'm just dying to play a slow blues.' I'd say: 'Okay, I'll get up and sing one.' 'What? You can't sing?' 'Well, good enough.' So we'd do *Five Long Years* or something like that."

So Clapton was never able to express himself through the intensity and measured pace of a slow blues, where timing makes the notes you don't play as meaningful as the ones you do. Worse still, his personal vision was at odds not only with Yardbirds manager Giorgio Gomelsky, who was looking for pop success, but also with guitarist Paul Samwell-Smith, who became the band's musical director and had found that elusive hit single when he heard a song called *For Your Love*, written by up-and-coming songwriter Graham Gouldman (later of 10cc). On The Yardbirds' hit recording of it, the lead guitar was buried in the mix. A showdown between Clapton and Gomelsky followed, and then Clapton was gone.

As Keith Relf observed sadly: "Eric loves the blues so much. I suppose he didn't like it being played badly by a white shower like us."

Relf didn't know the half of it, however. For

Comic capers: (l-r) John Mayall, Eric Clapton, John McVie and Hughie Flint on the Beano album cover.

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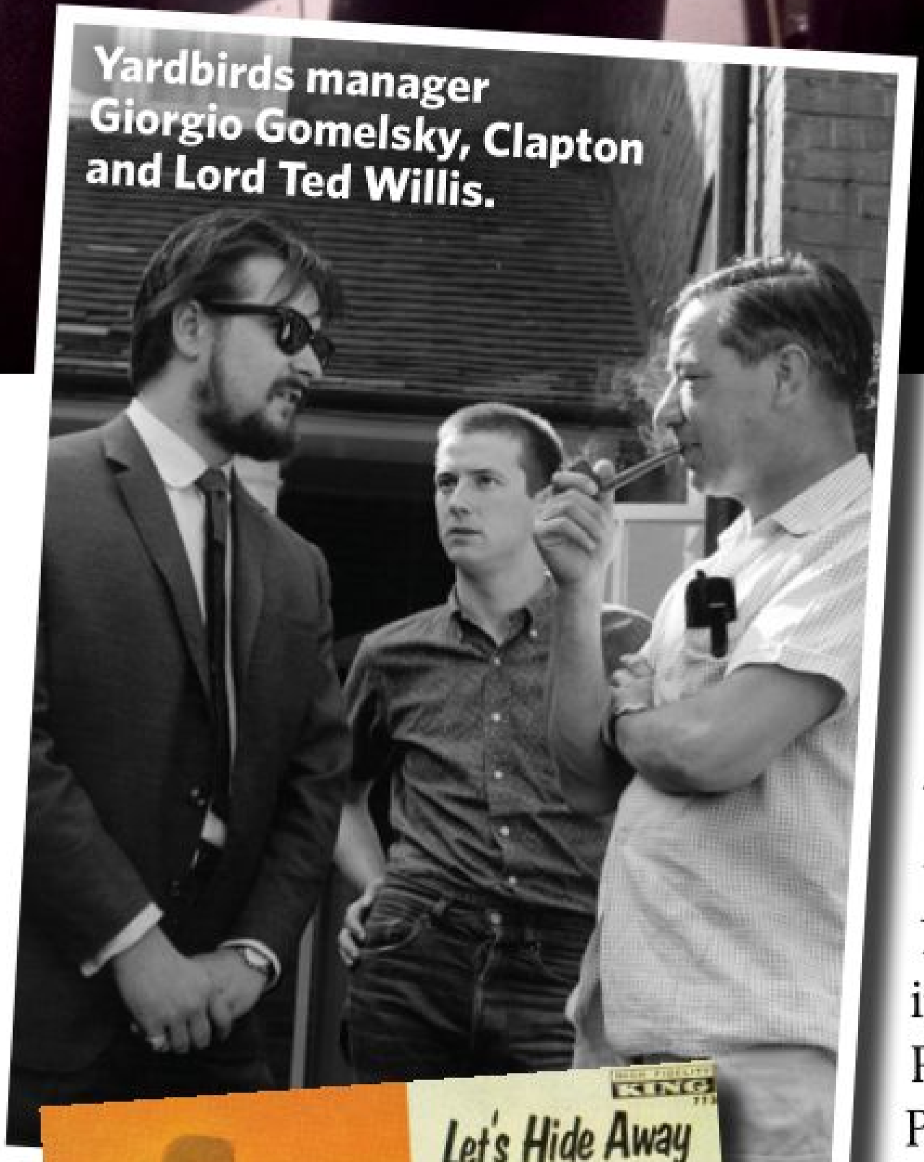
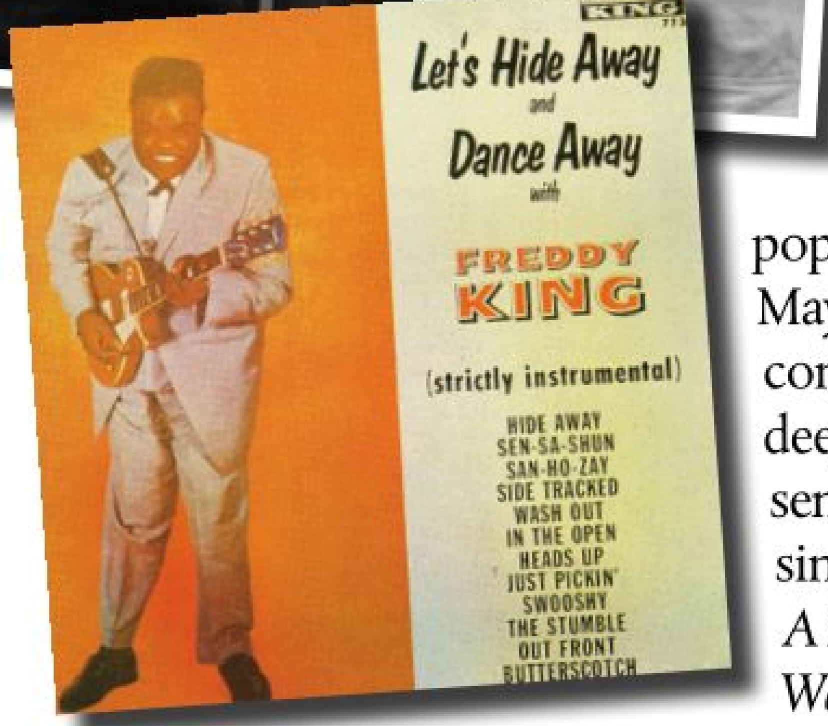
The future's orange: as good as they were, Clapton soon outgrew the Yardbirds.

YARDBIRDS: REX FEATURES; CLAPTON: GETTY IMAGES



Yardbirds manager Giorgio Gomelsky, Clapton and Lord Ted Willis.



Eric, playing the blues *his way* was not just a matter of life and death – it really was more important than that. In a painfully honest interview with teen magazine *Rave* shortly after he'd left, Eric displayed how out of place and detached he felt in the band: "I lived as part of The Yardbirds unit, yet I was completely out of touch with it. I couldn't speak and be understood. And they couldn't speak to me either. We just couldn't communicate… If I hadn't left The Yardbirds I wouldn't have been able to play real blues much longer because I was destroying myself."

Possessed of a wafer-thin skin, a psychologically bruised Clapton, still only 19, retreated to the countryside, into the care of Ben Palmer, the pianist friend from Eric's first real group, The Roosters. Equally cynical of the music business, Palmer had chucked it all in to restore antiques and make cabinets. Cooking, talking and listening to music at Palmer's place gave Eric the chance to catch his breath while he worked out what to do next.

Meanwhile, another blues crusader was struggling. At the urging of Alexis Korner, Macclesfield-born guitarist, keyboard player, singer and harmonica player John Mayall (who as a teenager gained some local celebrity when the *Manchester Evening News* ran a story about how he lived in a tree house in his mother's garden) moved down to London in January 1963 and formed The Blues Breakers, who, like Alexis's own bands, went through a number of line-ups over the next couple of years. In a sense the first wave of British blues was over; never a pure blues artist, Alexis Korner's repertoire could just as easily feature a Charlie Mingus tune as a Muddy Waters cover, while Cyril Davies, the real Chicago blues flag waver, had tragically died in January 1964. All the other blues-inspired bands, such as The Rolling Stones, Yardbirds, Pretty Things and the rest, had diverted down a Bo Diddley/Chuck Berry-driven pop R&B route. This left John Mayall trying to find a formula for commercial success while still deeply committed to blues sensibilities. Two Mayall-penned singles for Decca – *Crawling Up A Hill* (May 1964) and *Crocodile Walk* (April 1965) – failed to trouble the chart; a similar fate awaited a live album recorded in December 1964: *John Mayall Plays John Mayall*, recorded at Klooks Kleek, a club above the Railway Tavern pub in West Hampstead, next door to the Decca studios.

Apart from the lack of chart success, what was holding Mayall's band back as a blues outfit was the lead guitar. Roger Dean had replaced former Cyril Davies guitarist Bernie Watson. Both were accomplished players who could knock off some Chuck Berry or T-Bone Walker licks, but Dean was actually more comfortable in Chet Atkins mode, and neither could get to grips with the stinging, single-string playing styles of a BB or Freddie King.

However, unlike The Yardbirds, who struggled when they backed Sonny Boy Williamson ("Those boys want to play the blues so bad – and they play the blues so bad," was his alleged famous comment) The Blues Breakers made a pretty good fist of backing T-Bone on his 1965 UK tour.

On March 28 the tour rolled into Nottingham. It was here that John Mayall gathered his rhythm section of drummer Hughie Flint and bassist John McVie around a jukebox and said: "Listen to this." What they heard was Eric Clapton stretching out on *Got To Hurry*, the B-side of *For Your Love*. "John asked us what we thought – and of course we said that it sounded pretty good," Flint recalls . "John said: 'That's Eric Clapton. And he's just left The Yardbirds. Should we ask him to join?' To which we replied: 'Yeah.'"

Eric actually took some persuading when Mayall phoned. But "one day, I got in the van and there he was", Flint remembers.

With no rehearsals, Clapton played the first gig with Mayall in early April, and straight away Mayall knew he had made the right choice: "He was the first guitarist I'd heard who had it – you know, the elusive 'it'," the bandleader reacalls.

Eric moved out of Ben's place and in with John and Pamela Mayall and their four kids. Not feeling part of the family, he squirrelled himself away in a tiny room at the top of the house where he stayed most of the time, listening to Mayall's vast record collection and practising guitar.

The arrival of Eric gave John the chance to further develop the band along Chicago blues lines – he put away his own guitar and concentrated on keyboards and harmonica. Almost as soon as Eric joined, they recorded five songs for the BBC radio show *Saturday Club*, one of which was Freddie King's *Hideaway*, which Eric had heard on the 1962 album *Let's Dance Away And Hide Away with Freddie King*. But it wasn't just the music that grabbed Eric's attention on that occasion – on the front cover, Freddie King was clutching a Gibson Les Paul.

Eric's first electric guitar had been a double-cutaway Kay Red Devil (actually a yellowy/pink sunburst colour, which he'd covered in black sticky-backed plastic) purchased in 1962 with financial assistance from his grandparents. It was a copy of another Gibson guitar, the semi-solid ES335, one of which Eric later played for real with The Yardbirds, on loan from Yardbirds rhythm guitarist Chris Dreja. Eric's main guitar during the Yardbirds years was a red Fender Telecaster played through a Vox amp, producing a sound which Mike Vernon describes politely as "pissy". Jeff Beck initially played Eric's Telecaster when he took over in The Yardbirds ("A terrible guitar," he said later), but Eric retrieved it for his early gigs with Mayall.

Then Eric spotted a magnificent flame-top maple 1958-60 Les Paul in Lew Davis's music shop in London's West End and snapped it up for around £120, which was relatively cheap because the heavy Les Pauls had fallen out of favour in the face of the challenge from the ES335 and models from Fender, Rickenbacker, Gretsch and Guild. Now he had a guitar with a sound that was very far from pissy: its powerful 'humbucking' pickups could drive an amp well into uncharted realms of distortion and sustain.

But which amp? Freddie King used a meaty Fender Bassman, rare and expensive in the UK. Eric's limp Vox amp couldn't handle it.

The answer came not from the hallowed halls of American guitar manufacture, but from a small music shop in west London. Jim Marshall was the boss, Ken Bran his repairman. Requests from musicians for more powerful amps had led Ken to build a UK version of the Bassman. When guys plugged their shiny new Fenders into the new Marshall 45-watt, 2x12 combo, the results were great. When Eric plugged in his Les Paul the sound was astonishing: a thick, creamy, gut-wrencher that trumped anything heard in the States.

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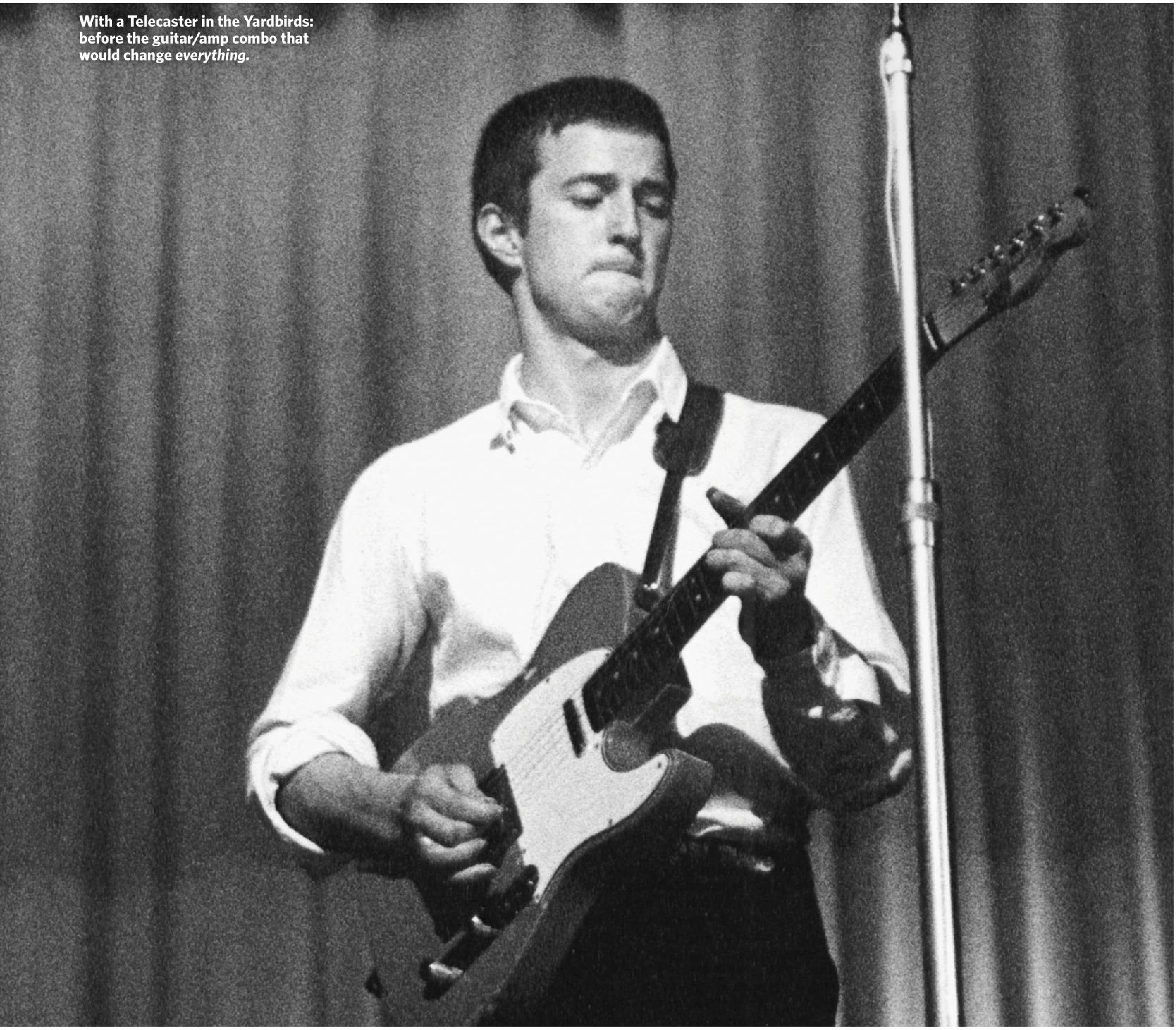

With a Telecaster in the Yardbirds: before the guitar/amp combo that would change *everything.*

GETTY

Eric appeared settled. He had the right equipment to match his aggressive style, all the records he could absorb, and plenty of gigs all over the country, playing exactly the kind of music denied him in The Yardbirds – and establishing his reputation as the hottest guitarist on the scene. Audiences at Blues Breakers gigs were swollen by the arrival of Clapton's own fan club, and it was around this time that the legendary graffiti declaring 'Clapton is God' began to appear around London. In his autobiography, Eric says he was very much torn by the growing acclaim: "I was a bit mystified by this and part of me ran a mile from it. I really didn't want that kind of notoriety… Another part of me really liked the idea, that what I had been fostering all these years was finally getting some recognition."

Although Mayall was building up a reasonable head of steam on the club circuit, the search for a hit record continued. After the failure of his recordings for Decca, he'd been dropped by the label. In the summer of '65 he signed with Immediate Records, a new label set up by Tony Calder and Rolling Stones manager Andrew Oldham. With Jimmy Page as the house producer, The Bluebreakers recorded *I'm Your Witch Doctor* and *Telephone Blues*, put out by Immediate as a single with the former as the A-side and the latter on the B-side. A third track, *On Top of the World*, went unreleased until 1968, along with some unremarkable blues noodlings recorded by Jimmy and Eric at Jimmy's house, where Eric had stayed after a nearby Mayall gig.

Up to that point there had been sporadic hints on record of the Eric Clapton to come – tentative and reverential solos on the live Yardbirds album with Sonny Boy Williamson (*Mr Downchild* and *23 Hours Too Long*), and the track that first attracted Mayall. But Jimmy Page allowed Eric to begin

LK 4804

"ERIC WAS THE FIRST GUITARIST I'D HEARD WHO HAD IT – YOU KNOW, THE ELUSIVE 'IT'."

– JOHN MAYALL

MY OLD FRIEND ERIC, BY DAVE BROCK

How the Hawkwind maverick befriended a pre-fame Clapton.

"In the 1960s we all used to go to Eel Pie Island, which was a jazz club that evolved into a rhythm and blues club. I was already playing guitar, and Eric didn't have one, and we used to sit out on the lawn on Eel Pie Island and play the blues. There's a photo of him and me together at the Strawberry Fayre in Twickenham. I'm playing an old Washburn guitar that I used to lend him. In fact he got drunk one day and sat on it and broke the bloody thing. We were only 17 or 18 then. It was a long time ago.

"We used to listen to a lot of old blues artists like Big Bill Broonzy, Lightnin' Hopkins and Robert Johnson, and try to copy how they used to play. We were just learning how to play the guitar and learning how to play the blues. In those days I never had an inkling of his talent. I never kept track of his progress, until The Yardbirds, because I knew the singer, Keith Relf.

"In 1969 Eric got a place in Notting Hill Gate, and I was busking then down the Portobello Road so I used to pop round to his place for a cup of tea. When Hawkwind played the Porchester Hall last year he sent us an email saying that he would have liked to have been there and wished us good luck. He's a wonderful guitarist, always has been."

GETTY X2

John Mayall's Blues Breakers: the line-up that in 1966 recorded a truly iconic album.

unleashing the power he now had at his command with the Gibson/Marshall set-up – striking single-note feedback solos (an idea he may have copped from Jeff Beck) on …*Witchdoctor* and *On Top Of The World*, and signature soloing on *Telephone Blues*.

Which is where we came in. Jimmy Page recalled: "I remember when we did *I'm Your Witch Doctor*, he had all that sound down, and the engineer, who was co-operating up to that point, but was used to doing orchestras and big bands, suddenly turned off the machine and said: 'This guitarist is unrecordable!' I told him just to record and I'd take full responsibility."

And so John Mayall could have been forgiven for thinking that finally he had a regular and stable top-flight blues outfit for whom the only way was up. But he hadn't reckoned with the wayward spirit that was Eric Clapton. Eric was no guitar grunt, but an intelligent and curious man who was interested in art and culture. He fell in with a group of musicians and poets who between them concocted the sort of mad plan that comes from spending too much time in a fug of dope smoke. This was to be Eric's 'gap year', on the road with his mates in a band they called The Glands. Setting off in September, this "hare-brained scheme" (as Mayall calls it, tersely) ended prematurely and slightly dangerously for Eric in Greece. Mayall, meanwhile, was left trying to hold it all together with a succession of replacement guitarists that included John McLaughlin and Peter Green. By the time Eric phoned John to claim his job back in late October – instantly agreed to by Mayall – bassist John McVie had been sacked for having one drink too many, and Eric found himself in a Mayall band that also included Jack Bruce on bass for about a dozen gigs before Jack was poached by Manfred Mann.

Nothing came of the deal with Immediate. Mayall was unhappy with the arrangements, and approached Mike Vernon to see if Decca would give him another chance. Vernon said to Hugh Mendl at Decca: "You really need to have another look at John Mayall And The Blues Breakers. Now they've got Eric Clapton on guitar they're going to be big-time – they've got an enormous following, they're working five or six nights a week." Mendl said: "If you think it's the right thing to do I'll push it through. Go ahead, and we'll get contracts drawn up."

While that was going through, Vernon had an idea. "They weren't under contract to Immediate any more, and as well as *R&B Monthly*, me, Richard and Neil had this little fledgling label called Blue Horizon where we produced only 99 copies of each record – to avoid purchase tax – and we sold by mail-order only. We were thinking of starting up another label called Purdah. So I said to John and Eric: 'Before we make this record with Decca, how do you fancy making something for Purdah?' They thought it was a great idea, and decided to do *Bernard Jenkins* and *Lonely Years* as a duo like an old Chicago record.

"We talked it through, and I suggested we just use one microphone. We went into the original Wessex studios in Old Compton Street, up on the third floor right in the middle of Soho. We did it in one afternoon. I think it only took a couple of hours. We put an old microphone on a boom stand, and John and Eric set up, Eric a bit further away from the piano. We moved the mic around until it sounded right and then we said: 'Let's go.'"

This wasn't the first time Vernon had worked with Eric in the studio. Vernon and Giorgio Gomelsky had co-produced the first Yardbirds demos, back in February 1964, and also Vernon lit up Eric's life by asking him to play lead guitar on two studio tracks with Otis Spann and the Muddy Waters Band.

Eric had become obsessed with the character of Bernard Jenkins, the caretaker in Harold Pinter's eponymous play. He bought the script, knew it off by heart, and saw the film *The Caretaker*, with Donald Pleasance as Bernard Jenkins, several times. Its themes of isolation, the inability to communicate and the way the characters attempt to manipulate and deceive each other all resonated strongly with the complex personality that was Eric Clapton. Musicians have testified that back in those early days that you never quite knew where you were with Eric. He could be your best friend one day, and blank you the next. Mood swings that became as well known as his frequent changes in appearance.

LK 4804

'JIMMY PAGE ALLOWED ERIC TO BEGIN UNLEASHING THE POWER HE NOW HAD WITH THE GIBSON/MARSHALL SET-UP.'

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For Mike Vernon, *Lonely Years* was "the finest effort Eric ever put on record. It just sums up exactly what Eric was about at that time – that real down-home feel. That record was the closest I came to a real Chicago sound. As I said, we only pressed 99 copies, but in three months we sold a thousand. I think I actually sold the masters to Immediate, funnily enough. I was quite friendly with Tony Calder. Decca didn't know what was going on. There was no need for them to."

Praise for the record came from an unexpected source: Paul Oliver raving about it in *Jazz Monthly*. Oliver was normally associated with an older posse of critics, journalists and academics who felt they'ad found the blues and it was their domain, their property. And, Vernon says, they felt that "these young, white, long-haired buggers had no right to it. But I was not dim-witted as to think that John Mayall and Eric Clapton were not the real thing, to think they were just a nasty smell that would go away next week. It became an extremely pungent nasty smell for a very long time – and thank God for it."

The deal with Decca Records was struck, and it was agreed to forget about the singles market and go for a studio album. And, importantly, on that album, Mayall says, "I wanted to capture the sound of the band live on stage".

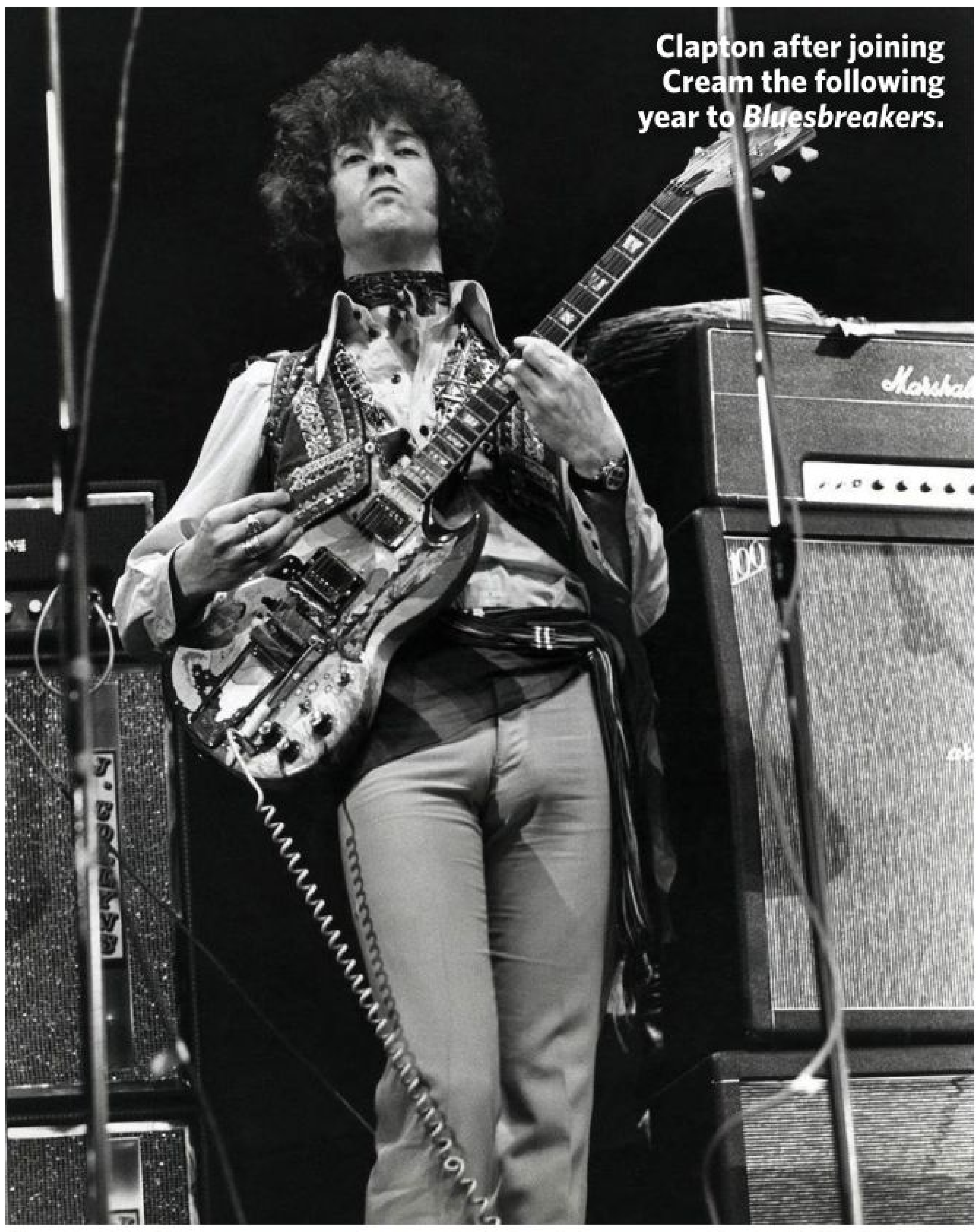
That aim of Mayall's was laudable, Mike Vernon says, but adds that it was also "very, very difficult because the acoustics of live venues vary so much between studios. And back then studios had written rules about 'you can't do this and you can't do that' coming from men in white coats. Until Gus Dudgeon arrived, and then it was all tight trousers, bright socks and sneakers."

After being sacked from various jobs, Dudgeon started out at Decca studios as tea boy and, despite having no experience at all, progressed to sound engineer by initially demonstrating that he knew how to use and repair a tape recorder. In 1964 he had been the engineer on The Zombies' hit *She's Not There*, and in Dudgeon Mike Vernon soon spotted a kindred spirit. But as Mayall and his band set up in Decca's Studio 2 to start recording the album, even Dudgeon became worried.

Vernon describes the set-up on the first day of recording, in March 1966: "If you can imagine the control room window looking into the studio, immediately opposite is the drum booth, enclosed from about shoulder height if you're sitting at the drums, across the sides and over the top. John McVie [back in the band from January] was sitting to the right of that with his amp in front of the board, with the bass drum behind it. To the right of the control room was where the organ was set up and where John did the vocals. We dressed up the vocals with reverb, delays and things like that. So bass, organ, drums, that was all fine."

But not from drummer Hughie Flint's point of view: "I was told to play on the hi-hat as much as possible," he says, "not to do crash cymbals unless absolutely necessary."

The real problems began when it came to the guitar. "We all knew," says Vernon, "that the guitar would be the main issue. Except Gus, who hadn't seen the band play live. And he had a real shock when Eric arrived, plugged in, turned everything on and started playing. Gus almost fell over. He looked at me and I knew exactly what he was thinking: 'Jesus Christ, we're gonna have to turn that down!' And of course that's when the 'discussions' started. It was never an argument, but it was definitely a 'discussion' about how the hell we were going to record this. The sound was going everywhere because it was so loud. The studio wasn't that small, you could get a brass section and background singers in there."



Clapton after joining Cream the following year to *Bluesbreakers*.

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But if the idea was to capture the live sound of the band, then Eric was going to play exactly as he did live, which was loud. In fact although Eric had more recording experience than anybody else in the band, he was quite sniffy about recording the blues in a studio at all, much preferring to do live recordings to capture the passion on the night.

"We had him turn the amp towards the wall and angle it slightly towards the control room," Vernon says of their efforts to find a way round the problem caused by the volume Eric insisted on playing at, and the 'bleed' on to the recording of the other instruments that it lead to. "Then we put half-transparent boards up all around it and put a microphone about two to three feet from the amp. Then we draped a huge great blanket over the top of the stack and over the mic in an attempt to actually keep the sound in there. So when they started playing, it sounded reasonably akin to how they sounded live. But the guitar was in everything. We recorded on four-track, so when you opened up the drums you definitely had guitar in it. Same with the bass and vocals. But John actually did some of the vocal tracks over again, so the guitar didn't become an issue.

"The reason for angling the amp was to make sure all the sound didn't come straight out into the room, otherwise we would have stood no chance at all. We had no more isolation rooms that were usable. Actually, we had one room at the end of the studio, with a door and a glass window, that doubled as a vocal booth and a tape store room, but if we'd put it in there Eric wouldn't have really heard his amp – he would have needed to wear headphones, and he didn't want to do that. He said: 'I want to play as if I'm doing a gig. I want to be standing right next to the amp. I want to be able to hear what I'm doing and what everybody else is doing.' A tall order in 1966. Gus was going: 'We can't do this, man. We can't do it. We're not allowed.' So I said: 'Come on, we need to work together with these guys, and we'll get a great sound. And when we do, they'll play and it will be wonderful.'

"It took a while to get a sound that everybody was happy with, especially Eric, but everybody had to take on board that we were going into an unknown era. Nobody in Decca studios had ever witnessed somebody coming into the studio, setting up their guitar and amp and playing at that volume. People in the canteen behind the studio were complaining about the noise. Normally they'd never hear it, but this was travelling around the studio complex. People were saying: 'What the bloody hell is that?!' and coming to see what was going on."

(Arguments among guitar freaks have raged down the years as to whether or not Eric used a Dallas Rangemaster treble booster in the studio. Well, the answer is no, he didn't – and that's straight from the source.)

As for the songs that were to appear on the album, Vernon recalls: "We probably didn't do as much planning for the album as we should have done. My discussions were directly with John. He chose the material."

The album was supposed to reflect the band's live set at the time and, with its mixture of Chicago blues covers and Mayall compositions, for the most part it did. The Blues Breakers had a large contingent of followers at the Flamingo Club,

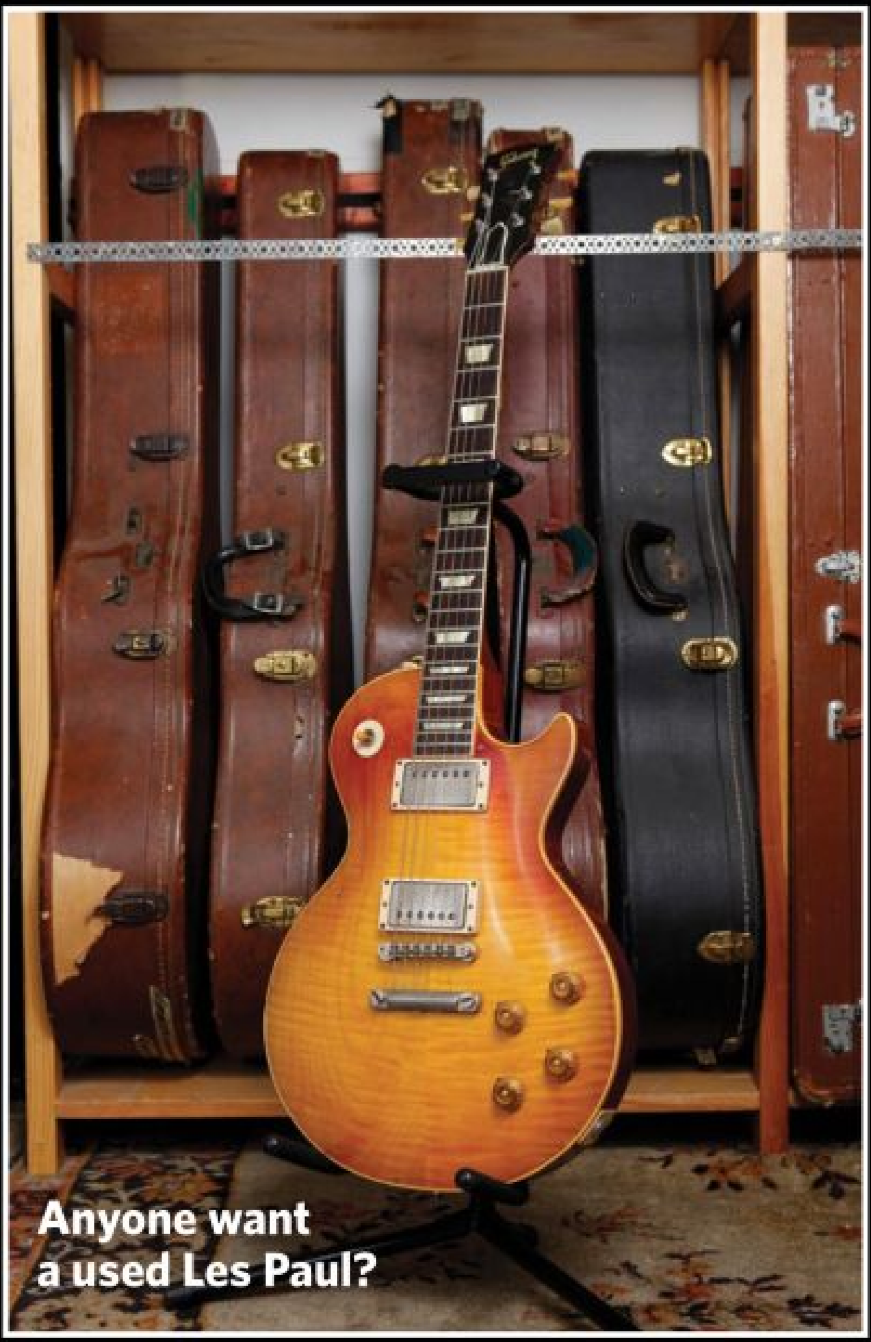
"PEOPLE WERE SAYING: 'WHAT THE BLOODY HELL IS THAT?!' AND COMING TO SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON." – PRODUCER MIKE VERNON

DID THE BEANO LES PAUL ADD ITS MAGIC TO WHITESNAKE?

The Les Paul that Eric Clapton played on the Beano album was stolen soon afterwards and has never been seen again. But former Whitesnake guitarist Bernie Marsden has a vintage Les Paul, and *CR*'s Hugh Fielder has a flashback…

The guitar that Eric Clapton played on the Beano album – a 1960 Gibson Les Paul Standard with a sunburst finish – has, not surprisingly, become a holy grail for blues guitar enthusiasts. Unfortunately the guitar was stolen just a few months after the album was recorded, in July 1966, while Clapton was rehearsing with Cream. It has never resurfaced, although numerous rumours and theories have emerged instead.

When a remastered version of the album was released in 1998 it included previously unpublished photographs showing that the guitar's pick-up covers had been removed, but there were no other distinguishing marks. Indeed Clapton now says there is no way of confirming the authenticity of the guitar.


Anyone want a used Les Paul?

Cue a flashback from your reporter who reviewed gig for *Sounds* magazine in the dim and distant mid-70s. He cannot recall the gig, but he can remember sitting with Bernie Marsden, who told him that the guitar in his lap was the one Clapton played on the Beano album.

"You're not entirely wrong," Marsden chuckled recently when I tracked him down. "I bought a 1960 Les Paul Standard in 1974 when I was in Wild Turkey. This guy seemed particularly keen that I should have it. What clinched it was when he brought it to a gig at the Marquee. Suddenly it was as if I was using two amplifiers.

"Some months later I saw him again and he asked how I was getting on with the guitar. I said I was delighted. And it was only then that he told me that it had been Eric Clapton's guitar, the one he used on the Beano album. I had no idea at the time that that guitar had been stolen.

"Now, I'm not saying that it is and I'm not saying that it isn't. I don't think there's any way of knowing for sure. But both Jeff Beck and Jack Bruce cast knowing glances at it when they saw it.

"I do know it's a special guitar. I call it The Beast because it's such an animal. I played it constantly for the next 20 years, all through my time in Whitesnake.

"People ask me if I still have The Beast and I say, yeah, but it's locked away now. Any 1960 Les Paul is worth a bit these days."

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a posse of black American GIs who, as fans of Jimmy Smith, were into the organ-driven bands of Georgie Fame, Brian Auger and Graham Bond, and were actually more appreciative of Mayall's organ playing than of what Clapton was doing. So Mayall wanted to include the sounds of Mose Allison (*Parchman Farm*) and Ray Charles (*What'd I Say*).

Vernon, though, had his doubts about the second one: "I do remember saying that I wasn't too keen on doing *What'd I Say* – you're up against a Ray Charles record which was pretty huge. But John said they did it live and people liked it, and it gave Hughie a chance to do a drum solo – which, under my breath, I said: 'Oh no'. But I don't think the drum solo was Hughie's idea, he didn't see himself as a solo drummer."

Indeed it wasn't Hughie's idea. Looking back, the drummer says: "I was a bit apprehensive about doing the solo on the recording. On stage you can get away with anything and it sounded fairly

exciting. But I wasn't that happy with it at the time. I was never a great soloist."

The version of *Double Crossing Time* that appears on the album was actually recorded for Immediate Records prior to Christmas '65 with John Bradley on bass, brought in quickly to replace Jack Bruce who'd jumped ship to Manfred Mann on the promise of vast riches (which of course never materialised). John and Eric were somewhat pissed off by Bruce's departure, and together wrote *Double Crossing Man*, later changed to *Double Crossing Time*. Eric's solo on that track, however, was dubbed on during the recording of the album.

One song which was definitely not in Mayall's live sets was Robert Johnson's *Ramblin' On My Mind*. Recorded for the album as a sparse, plaintive guitar-and-piano track, it's notable for being Clapton's debut vocal performance on record. He later told US music critic Peter Guralnick: "I don't think I'd ever heard of Robert Johnson when I found the record… I was around 15 or 16, and it was a real shock to find something that powerful… What struck me about Robert Johnson's record was that it seemed as if he wasn't playing for an audience. It didn't obey the rules of time or harmony or anything. It led me to a belief that here was a guy who really didn't play for people at all, that his thing was so unbearable for him to have to live with that he was almost, like, ashamed of it, you know. This was an image, really, that I was very, very keen to hang on to.

"I'd been singing and playing in that style for so long, it was really just a question of turning the tape machines on. The leap came in accepting that this thing was going to go onto plastic and would be recorded. Accepting that took a lot of convincing from John, who really kept having to tell me that it was worth it."

The contributions of saxophonists Alan Skidmore (tenor) and John Almond (baritone) and trumpeter Derek (wrongly credited on the sleeve as 'Dennis') Healey deserve honourable mentions. "I used to see Jimmy and Alan Skidmore in the jazz clubs, so I brought Alan in for the recording," Mayall recalls. Many of the original Chicago blues bands used horns both on stage and on record, and John himself had used Nigel Stanger on sax for the previous live album. But the white blues purists were aghast. Mayall had little time for "people pretending to know your music better than you do. We were learning from people we admired and being as true to the music as possible."

Hughie Flint acknowledges that the band played well on the album, but concedes that "it was Eric who shone".

The album was a unique moment in time – a combination of Mayall's intellectual sincerity, and Clapton's savage intensity and emotional truth that ripped through all the key solos: the two instrumentals *Hideaway* and *Steppin' Out*, *Key To Love*, *Double Crossing Time* and of course the monumental *Have You Heard*. Clapton detonated a neon explosion of noise and notes, cutting, biting, trebly and harsh, angry, passionate, a firestorm of blues runs, intense yet controlled; a music caught in the crosshairs of a young man's frustration and anger, a man gripped by a psychic disturbance that he felt could be exorcised only through a Gibson/Marshall set-up. The simple skeleton framework of the blues allows acres of freedom inside. Neil Slaven wrote in his original sleeve notes: '…On his best nights Eric can make time stand still.' And on the album, in places he seems to produce the same effect.

The cover photograph for the record, which inspired the nickname the 'Beano album', was shot by Decca Publicity Art Dept. photographer David Wedgbury. Various locations were scouted, but before Wedgbury could take his shots in front of the wall he had to scrub off graffiti helpfully daubed on it by the band. Harold Wilson was the Prime Minister at the time, and also 'A Nit' according to the political analysts of The Bluebreakers – you can just see the remnants of the word in the top right-hand corner of the cover.

Eric had always loved comics, the *Beano* in particular, and feeling bored and unco-operative he just started reading the one he'd bought that morning. One of the comic's leading strips was Lord Snooty and his pals. Which in a way described The Blues Breakers. By his own

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admission, Eric regarded himself as a cut above any other white blues guitarist, and actually wrote the words 'Lord Eric' in Biro on his very first guitar. And while John was the bandleader, Eric was the star – and knew it. Nobody called Eric 'Lord Snooty of the blues', but at that time he probably was.

Mayall never saw this album as the route to taking the band to the next level. "You would be foolish to think an album would do that," he offers. "I have never recorded albums in that way – more as stepping stones. The priority is to produce some good blues music and get it down the way you want it. Where it goes from there is anybody's guess."

Hence it came as a massive shock when the *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* album, as it was titled, released in July 22, 1966, extraordinarily reached No.6 in the UK chart (a gritty blues album flanked by the likes of The Beatles, Herb Alpert And The Tijuana Brass, The Beach Boys and *The Sound Of Music* soundtrack) and enjoyed a chart stay of 17 weeks. Quick as a flash, Eric was phoning John to ask for more money. John was in no mood to be magnanimous, however, and brushed Eric off with a curt: "You got a session fee, the same as everybody else." Which is hardly surprising – after all, even by the time the first copies of the record were coming off the presses, Eric had dumped The Blues Breakers to go off and form Cream with Jack Bruce and drummer Ginger Baker.

Even as he lined up for the photo-shoot for the Beano album sleeve, Cream had already been rehearsing in secret. Kinks bassist Pete Quaife recalls Eric talking to him about forming a band as far back as Christmas 1965. In the same month that the album was recorded, Clapton was so self-assured in his ability that he was telling *Melody Maker* he was thinking of quitting the UK altogether and moving to Chicago because there was nothing for him at home. Hughie Flint recalls some BBC sessions Mayall's band did when Eric had to play quietly (preserved BBC recordings of *Crocodile Walk* and *Key To Love* spring to mind), and "where the contempt for what he was being asked to do just oozes out of it. Even on live gigs Eric could be very badly behaved and hardly play. Thankfully it didn't happen very often, although sometimes he wouldn't turn up at all and we would play as a trio."

By the time the Beano album was released, Clapton had already moved on to Cream.

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"IT HAS TO RANK AMONG THE TOP 10 INFUENTIAL ALBUMS EVER RECORDED. BUT IT HAS NEVER WON ANY AWARDS." – MIKE VERNON

Clapton's guitar playing on the groundbreaking, now iconic *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* album encapsulated everything about his development as a musician: his disrupted childhood, his disrupted adolescence, and the discovery of an art form, a mode of expression into which he could sublimate all his anger, his sense of isolation, playing combinations of notes which for him expressed more than words ever could. And all this tied to a knowing that, while he started out as Mayall's student, the band was now trailing in his wake and he knew he needed to move on. The short period that bassist Jack Bruce had spent in Mayall's band alongside Eric had shown him what was possible, where Eric could take this music and make it his own.

Nothing that John Mayall has done since – and Clapton only with Cream – has had the reach down the years and across rock music as *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* album. It opened up the world of the blues to young white audiences, announced the arrival of the modern guitar hero, and kick-started the cult of virtuosity, encouraging young musicians to become accomplished players. For most it was the first time they had heard and felt the power of a Les Paul through a cranked Marshall, a sound that helped define rock for decades afterwards. It saved the then-ailing Gibson guitar company, and put Marshall amplification on the international map – and on subsequent generations of guitarists' wish-lists.

Yet, as Mike Vernon points out, the album itself has hardly been acknowledged, certainly nothing like its legend and iconic status today might lead one to expect. "It would be a fascinating project for somebody to find out exactly how many units this album has sold in all the formats and different releases and in the different regions. Everybody wants to talk about this album, so many people own it and it has to rank among the top 10 influential albums ever recorded. But it has never won any awards, doesn't have silver or gold record status, isn't in any Hall Of Fame. And because I was a salaried staff producer at Decca I never got a royalty. I never made a bean-o."

Thanks to Chris Hjort, author of Strange Brew: Eric Clapton And The British Blues Boom 1965-1970.

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66 FROM '66

From proto-psychedelia to nascent heavy metal – and all points in between – these are the 66 albums and singles that built rock as we know it.

66 From '66 was written by Max Bell, Mark Blake (MBl), Bill DeMain, Jo Kendall, Paul Lester, Rob Hughes

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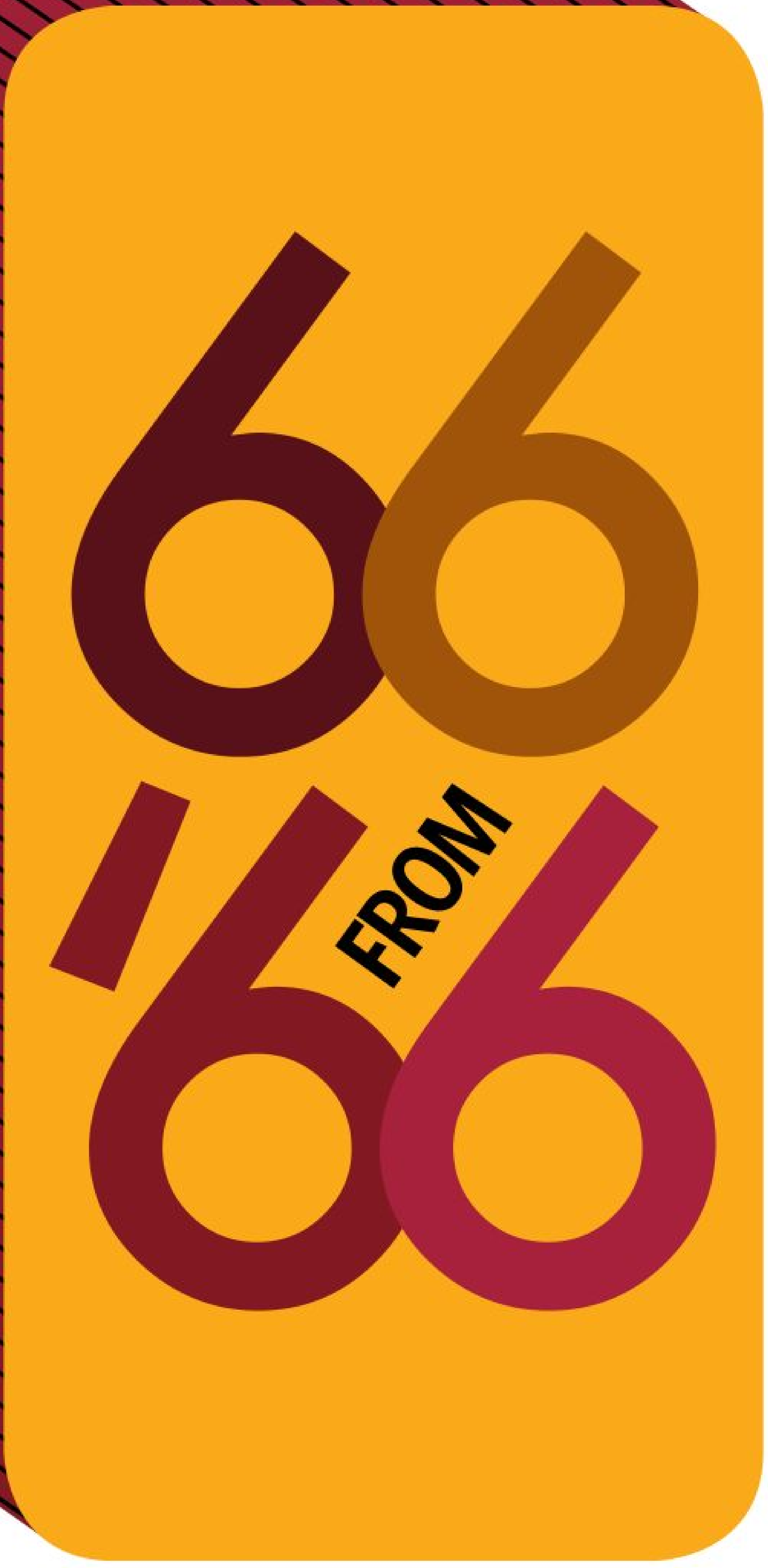


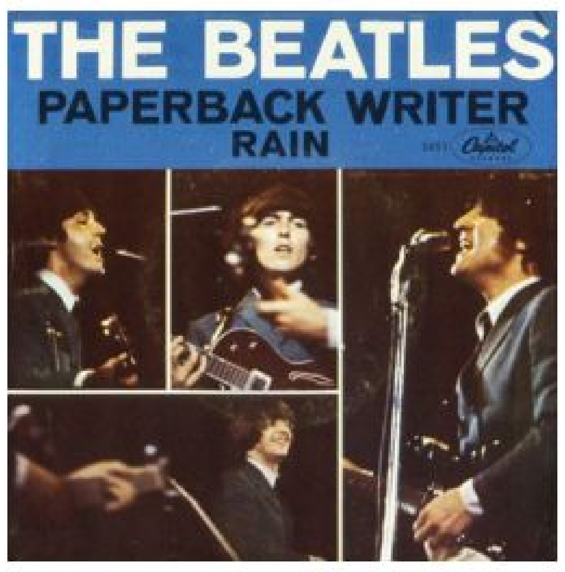
The Beatles

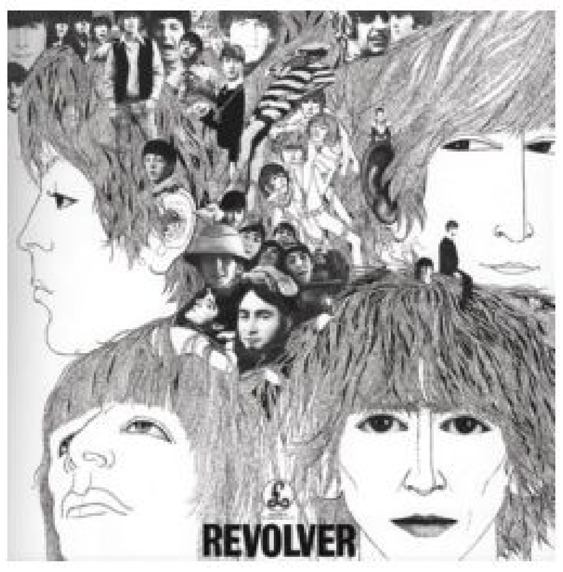
PAPERBACK WRITER

Parlophone single, June 10, 1966

REVOLVER

Parlophone, August 5, 1966





In 1965, The Beatles took their instruments into the studio and recorded songs the same way they'd play them on stage.

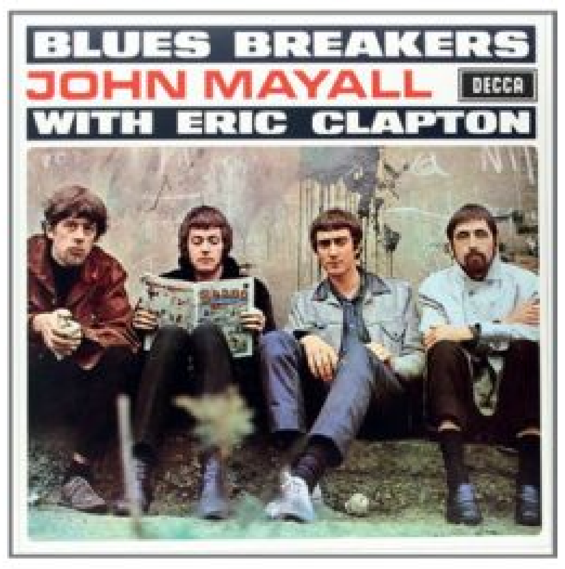
But in 1966 the studio became the instrument. And the other instruments became anything but themselves, and subject to the Fab Four's fanciful, lysergically enhanced imaginations. It was the difference between cinema-verité and Cinerama, and it was the Big Bang for rock record making.

Rain, the B-side of the single that dispatched their Mop-Top past, was a thrilling introduction to this sonic adventure. The rhythm track was recorded at a faster tempo, then slowed down, which altered the character and textures of the instruments. The electric guitars pulsated with a sawtoothed buzz. McCartney's bass, boosted by using a loudspeaker as a microphone, bounded out of the mix (the *Paperback Writer*/*Rain* single heralded Macca as rock's tastiest bassman). And John Lennon's voice, sped up, double-tracked and flipped, resounded like a psychedelic siren. All of this brilliance flowed right into *Revolver*. *Melody Maker* said: "The Beatles have definitely broken the bounds of what we used to call pop." And engineer Geoff Emerick declared: "From the day *Revolver* came out, it changed the way everyone else made records." **BdM**

Blues Breakers

THE BEANO ALBUM

Decca, July 22, 1966



BB King, Chuck Berry, Otis Rush… They all made their six strings cry and wail. But no fan ever felt moved to spray paint "…Is God" after those guitarists' names on an underground station wall. On the so-called Beano Album, John Mayall's Blues Breakers' hotshot disciple Eric Clapton combined scholarly dedication to the blues with a 21-year old's arrogance and attitude, and invented rock music's key protagonist: the guitar hero. Solos had never stepped out so far or so loudly. To that end, the tools Clapton used were crucial. The Gibson Les Paul through the Marshall amp became everyone's gold-standard combo.Clapton would play it brilliantly – and safely – over the next 50 years, but never again with such deity-like power. **BdM**

Blues Magoos

PSYCHEDELIC LOLLIPOP

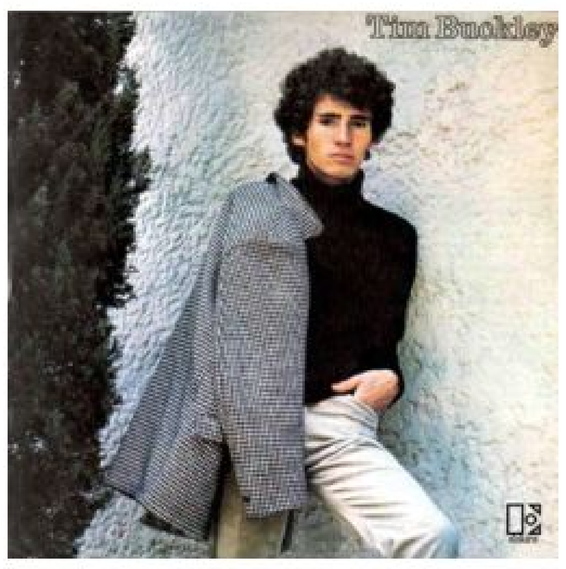
Fontana, November 1966

Early garage-rock heroes from The Bronx, Blues Magoos helped push the word 'psychedelic' into the public consciousness with the title of their first album. The collection gazed into the recent past (their cranked-up cover of John D Loudermilk's *Tobacco Road*), but had evidently ingested the funny pills, offering a futuristic, Byrds-ian angle on *One By One* (written by frontman 'Peppy' Theilhelm and bassist Ron Gilbert when they were 16 years old) and the proto-punk rock classic and US Top 5 hit *(We Ain't Got) Nothin' Yet*. In a competitive era, Blues Magoos stood out by dint of their sonic experimentation and their use of trippy giant lava lamps on stage. **MB**

Tim Buckley

TIM BUCKLEY

Elektra, October 1966



Tim Buckley was only 19 when he recorded his debut album with many of the era's finest talents. Elektra already knew they had someone special. At LA's Sunset Sound were The Doors' team of producer Paul Rothschild and engineer Bruce Botnick, Mothers Of Invention's drummer Billy Mundi, Brian Wilson collaborator Van Dyke Parks on keyboard overdubs, while the string arrangements were done by Phil Spector's sidekick Jack Nitzsche, who'd played piano and percussion on the Rolling Stones' *Aftermath*.

Buckley, the troubadour with the tremulous five-octave range, uses folk rock as the launch pad for his flights of fancy. *Wings* has the ornate grace of Buffalo Springfield's Nitzsche-gilded *Expecting To Fly*, and *It Happens Every Time* is a baroque pop beauty. Buckley is still operating within conventional parameters here, but there are signs – on *Song Of The Magician* and *Song Slowly Song* – of the artist who would soon slip his moorings for outer-limits forays such as *Lorca* and *Starsailor*. **BdM**

Buffalo Springfield

BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD

Atco, December 1966

Buffalo Springfield's 60s debut helped shape so much that happened in the 70s. Ostensibly billed as a folk-rock band, the quintet freely sprinkled their best songs (*Go And Say Goodbye*, *Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing*, *Hot Dusty Roads*) with elements of country, blues and psychedelia, giving rise to a more nebulous, less segregated strain of American music.

Rhythm guitarist Richie Furay would go on to form popular country rockers Poco, while both Stephen Stills and Neil Young became 70s superstars with CSNY and beyond. None of this would have been possible, however, without the existence of this groundbreaking record. **RH**

The Butterfield Blues Band

EAST-WEST

Elektra, August 1966

They came from a hardcore blues background, but harmonica-toting Paul Butterfield and his Blues Band were Elektra's first acid-rock act. Their second album was where Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters met free-form jazz, with guitarists Mike Bloomfield and Elvin Bishop providing the musical chops to back it up. Eclectic in the extreme, they covered Muddy's *Two Trains Running* and gave Allen Toussaint's *Get Out Of My Life Woman* a psychedelic edge. Elsewhere, their introduction to LSD in 1965 steered them towards improvised ragas that turned the 13-minute title track into a modal drone that lasted an hour on stage. This experimental approach would soon become the norm as Love and The Doors took BBB's cue, stepping away from three-minute pop and embracing the long-song format. **MB**

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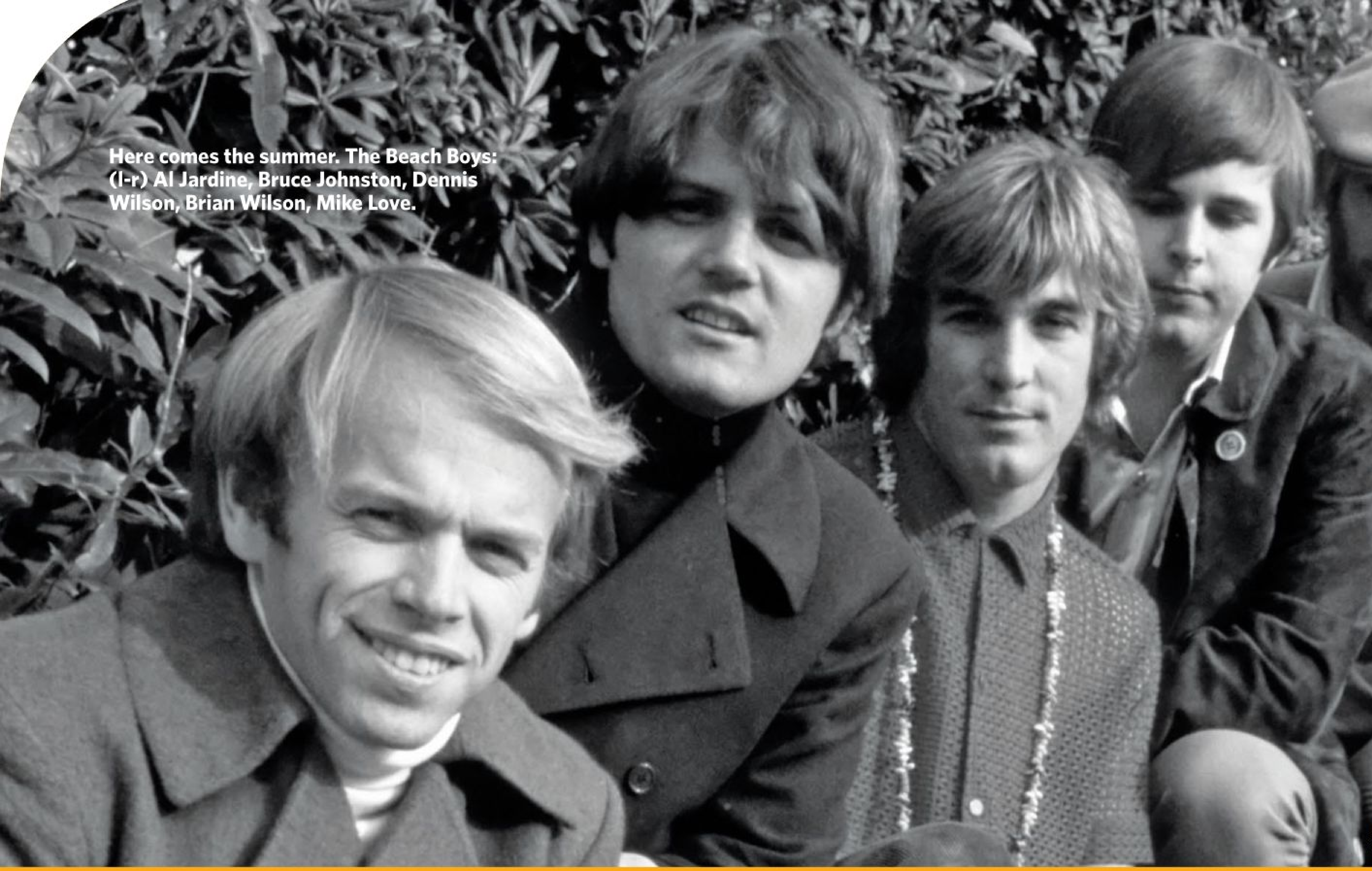

Here comes the summer. The Beach Boys: (l-r) Al Jardine, Bruce Johnston, Dennis Wilson, Brian Wilson, Mike Love.

THE BEACH BOYS

PET SOUNDS / GOOD VIBRATIONS

Capitol, May 16, 1966 — *Capitol single, Oct 10, 1966*

Historically, *Pet Sounds* has never been taken quite as seriously as Bob Dylan's *Blonde On Blonde* or The Beatles' *Revolver*. Perhaps this is down to the fact that The Beach Boys lacked the countercultural edge of Bob Dylan and The Beatles, or maybe it had something to do with its literal, artless front cover.

But that was then. In 2016, *Pet Sounds* is regarded not only as the equal of those records but, in some quarters, their superior. Certainly, together with the equally groundbreaking single *Good Vibrations*, which followed it five months later, it drew up an ambitious road map for rock's future.

It may have been a quantum leap for its composer, fragile 'man child' Brian Wilson, but *Pet Sounds* wasn't quite a bolt from the blue. Close scrutiny of the band's catalogue will reveal intimations of the album's lush, solipsist sorrow as far back as *The Lonely Sea*, from their 1963 second album *Surfin' USA*, or early ballads such as *The Warmth Of The Sun* and *In My Room*, while 1965's *Today!* featured a suite of songs on side two that evinced a harmonic sophistication and a desire to explore more mature themes than the usual surfing and hot rods.

Pet Sounds, though, was a sustained act of complex creation, one part work of orchestral ambition, one part proto-concept album. A nervous breakdown on a flight between LA and Houston in December 1964 had prompted Brian Wilson to refocus his energies from touring and promotion to the more enjoyable pursuits of songwriting and the boundless potential of the recording studio. He had been further liberated by his introduction to marijuana and hallucinogenics the following year. Now, with The Beatles' *Rubber Soul* ringing in his ears and his competitive streak risen, he set out to make what he promised his wife Marilyn would be "the greatest rock album ever made".

To turn the pocket symphonies in his head into gorgeous reality, he made two crucial moves. Firstly, he entrusted the task of translating his ideas about the loss of innocence and the imponderability of existence to advertising copywriter-turned-lyricist Tony Asher. Secondly, he enlisted the help of ace session musicians The Wrecking Crew, including guitarist Glen Campbell and bassist Carol Kaye, veterans of Phil Spector's Wall Of Sound, with the 23-year-old Wilson orchestrating the sessions himself.

The resultant songs – *Wouldn't It Be Nice, Don't Talk (Put Your Head On My Shoulder), I'm Waiting For The Day, God Only Knows, I Just Wasn't Made For These Times, Caroline, No* – were perfect miniatures of hymnal wonder, which expressed with devotional clarity the anxieties and longings of an adolescent poised on the cusp of agonising maturity.

If the role of the rest of The Beach Boys was diminished on a musical level, *Pet Sounds* was still a triumph of vocal layering. It certainly wouldn't have been possible without the input of Wilson's brothers Dennis and Carl, cousin Mike Love, Al Jardine and new member Bruce Johnston. In 2012, Mike Love suggested *Pet Sounds* was the work of a man "at the top of his game… as avant garde as pop has ever got", blowing his popular image as the villain of the Beach Boys story out of the water.

But Wilson wasn't done. *Pet Sounds* may have stalled at No.10 in the US after its release in May 1966, but any disappointment at its commercial performance was allayed by the arrival of a new single, *Good Vibrations*, in October. With its modal shifts and multi-sectional mosaic of sound fragments pieced together by Wilson over eight months in multiple studios, it set new standards with regard to what rock music could sound like and do, and blazed a trail for others to follow. It was the epic, euphoric anthesis of *Pet Sounds*'s glorious melancholia.

But how to describe it? The first psychedelic single? Acid bubblegum? Something else? In his own roundabout way, Brian Wilson answered the question himself when asked whether *Good Vibrations* was a pioneering example of progressive rock? "Yes," he replied simply, "it was." **PL**

'*Pet Sounds* and *Good Vibrations* drew up the road map for rock's future.'

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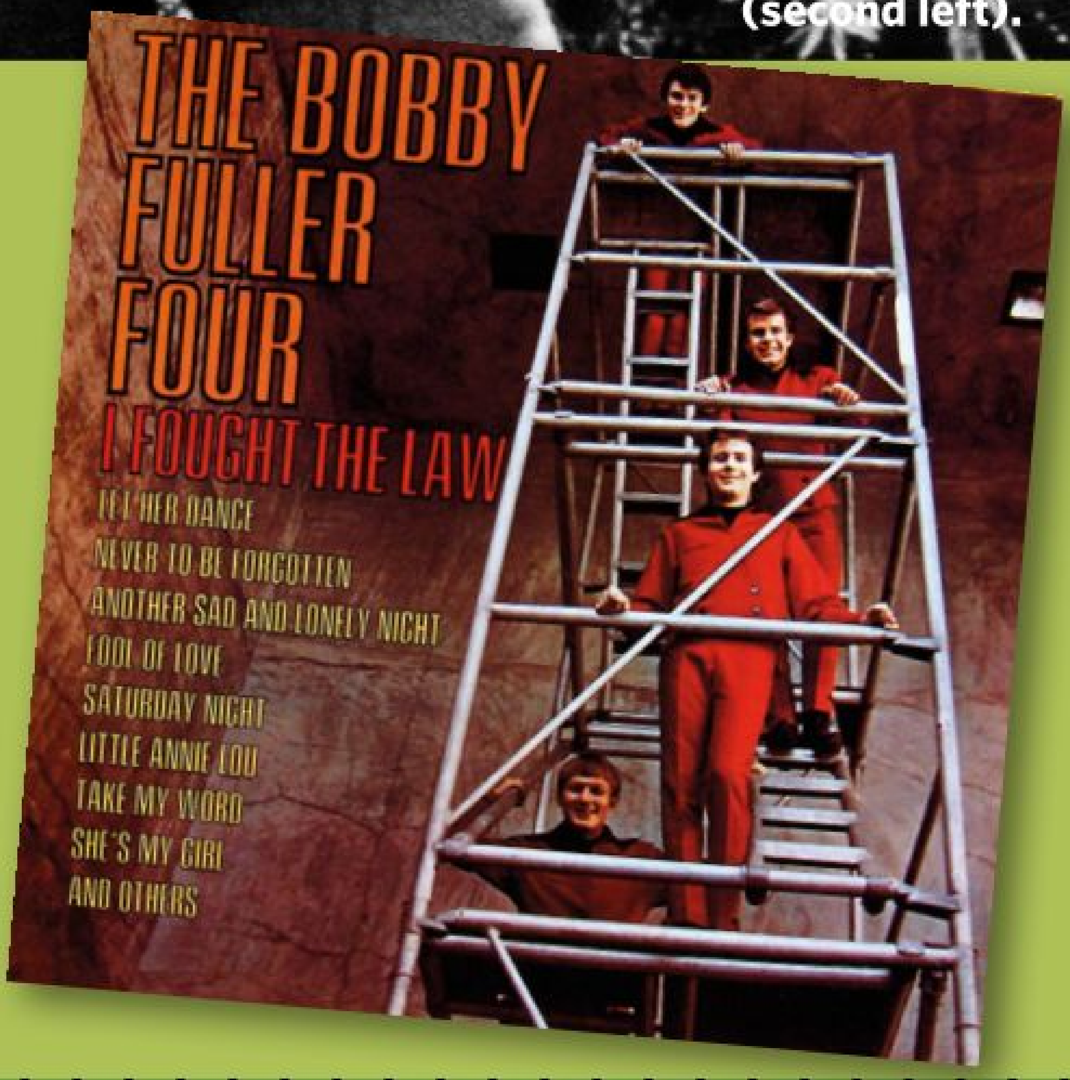
Sharp dressed men: The Bobby Fuller Four, with Fuller (second left).

THE BOBBY FULLER FOUR

I FOUGHT THE LAW

Del Fi single, December 1965



In the early 60s in El Paso, Texas, Bobby Fuller was a local hero, a renaissance man – or kid. He had his own club, Bobby Fuller's Teen Rendezvous, led his own band, The Fanatics, ran a label, Exeter Records, and booked tours for his band and other artists. Fuller was an impresario in the making.

By 1965, burning ambition lured him to Los Angeles, where he got drawn into the Mob-tied music business. The Fanatics fell in with Bob Keane, a smooth operator with links to guys named 'Handsome Johnny' and 'The Chin', signing with his label Del-Fi Records and rechristening themselves The Bobby Fuller Four. But chasing the brass ring meant compromise, in the form of payola, favours, tie-ins and endless back-scratching.

Their second single, a cover of Sonny Curtis's *I Fought The Law* – released at the end of 1965 but not making an impact until the start of 1966 – gave them a US Top 10 hit and made their name. Fuller described his style as "the border sound". Indeed it had echoes of Texas, Mexico and California – lean rockabilly, Tejano rhythms and twangy surf guitars – but it was also a response to The Beatles. Fuller was proud that he never imitated the Merseybeat style, and even wore a surfer's cross as a symbolic amulet against the British Invasion.

In summer 1966, the Fuller Four had just come off a gruelling three-month tour. They were exhausted and sick of each other. And Bobby was sick of how Keane was adding unwanted flourishes such as syrupy strings to his records without his consent, and grooming him as a solo pop singer. Bobby made it known that he was ready to pull the plug on everything and go back to his El Paso empire.

On July 16, the band and Keane were set for a big meeting to hash out the future. That afternoon, though, Fuller was found dead by his mother in her Oldsmobile, parked outside his apartment. There were smears of dried blood around his chin and mouth. His usually perfect clothes and hair were messed up and soaked with gasoline. His right hand was clutching a rubber siphoning tube. According to a dashed-off autopsy report, 23-year-old Fuller used that tube to commit suicide by swallowing half a gallon of petrol.

> 'According to the autopsy, Fuller committed suicide by swallowing half a gallon of petrol.'

That explanation satisfied the local police, who closed the case without even dusting for fingerprints. But questions remained. The car hadn't been in the parking lot 30 minutes before his mother found it, so why was Fuller's body in a state of advanced rigor mortis? Why did Keane take out an $800,000 life insurance policy on Fuller a month before his death? How deep were Keane's ties with the Mob? And how much did they know about Fuller's plan to split? And wasn't it worth exploring that Fuller was the third artist under Keane's charge, after Richie Valens and Sam Cooke, to die in strange, disputed circumstances?

Of all the big 'what ifs' in rock history, there is none more tantalising than 'What if Bobby Fuller had escaped that LA scene and gone back to Texas?' Like his hero Buddy Holly, who also died criminally young, there was surely more amazing music to come. Maybe Bobby Fuller would have become a kind of Lone Star Sam Phillips and 1966 would now be famous for his American Invasion of Britain? **BdM**

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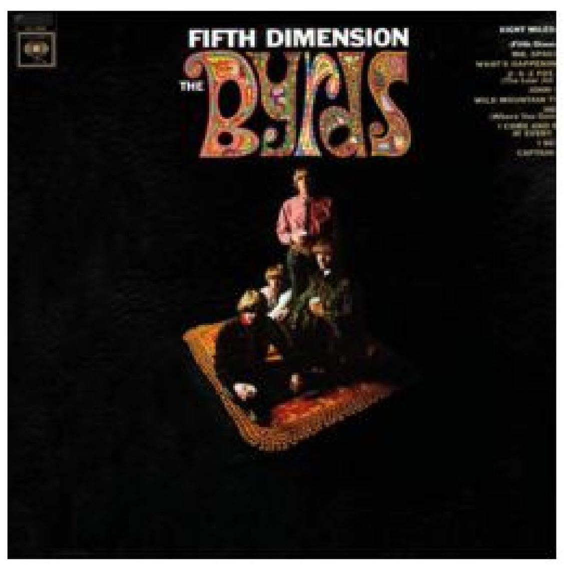
The Byrds

FIFTH DIMENSION

Columbia, July 18, 1966



The trippy mosaic logo on the front cover signalled the latest stop on The Byrds' timeless flight. The former folk rockers were now harbingers of psychedelia. Gone were the Dylan covers; gone too was Gene Clark, although there was one final contribution from him, an audacious team-up with David Crosby and Roger McGuinn called *Eight Miles High*, whose guitar extrapolations drew on free jazz for a new tonal quality christened 'raga rock'. If the lyrical subject matter – alien visitations (*Mr Spaceman*), Einstein's theory of relativity (*5D*) – was quixotic, the music inside was a crazy patchwork. **PL**

The Count Five

PSYCHOTIC REACTION

Double Shot single, July 1966

A highlight of the 1972 compilation *Nuggets*, *Psychotic Reaction* (released in 1965 but reissued to greater acclaim in '66) was inspired by a dull college tutorial about psychosis and neurosis. The San Jose quintet wrote a song that stuck a bomb under The Yardbirds' British Invasion sound, underpinned by John 'Mouse' Michalski's lurching fuzz guitar. That moment of academic tedium gave them a No.5 hit and introduced the double-time instrumental breakdown – borrowed from the Yardbirds' *I'm A Man* – to American listeners. Adored by screaming teens for their bizarre Count Dracula stage attire, Count Five made an album of the same name then went back to college. Remember them this way. **MB**

Cream

FRESH CREAM

Reaction, December 9, 1966

I FEEL FREE

Reaction single, December 1966

With their debut album and second single (available on the US pressing of *Fresh Cream*), Cream's pioneering sound pilfered from jazz as well as blues. Eric Clapton's guitar heroics were a vital component, but it was drummer Ginger Baker and singing bassist Jack Bruce, both formerly of jazz/R&B troupe The Graham Bond Organization, who gave *Fresh Cream* its wonderfully skewed angles. Between them the three musicians twisted bluesmen Willie Dixon's *Spoonful* and Skip James's *I'm So Glad* into strange new shapes.

But it was on originals such as the UK Top 20 hit *I Feel Free* that Cream's dizzying creativity came to the fore. Classically trained Bruce sang like a choirboy; North Londoner Baker's Afro drumming suggested Nigeria-via-Neasden, and Clapton brought dazzling guitar licks from the heart of the Surrey delta. In theory it shouldn't have worked. In practice Cream's daring collision of blues, jazz and infant psychedelia couldn't have worked better. **MBl**

The Creation

MAKING TIME

Planet single, June 1966

After three years on the East End beat circuit, the Mark Four met future Charisma Records guru Tony Stratton-Smith who reshaped them as pop-art exponents The Creation. "Our music is red with purple flashes," they declared, while playing aggro freakbeat to an accompaniment of living-canvas action paintings.

Overseen by The Who's first producer Shel Talmy and released on his label, Planet, their debut single took the mundane – kicking against the pricks while working in a clock factory – and shredded it with Kenny Pickett's sneering vocal and torrents of Who-style feedback. In the middle eight, guitar hero Eddie Phillips introduced an incendiary technique of playing with a violin bow that Jimmy Page would recycle with Zeppelin. A pulse-racing, anti-establishment banger from the band that inspired the name of Alan McGee's notoriously hedonistic record label, and a sonic kick for future feather-cutted young bucks to jut jaws to. **JK**

Spencer Davis Group

GIMME SOME LOVIN'

Fontana, October 28, 1966

Stevie Winwood was just 17 when he knocked out this hepped-up variation on the theme of Homer Banks's *Ain't That A Lot Of Love* in a run of iconic blue-eyed soul belters for the Birmingham quartet. Its spontaneous, live feel – "We wrote it in an hour, then went to the pub for lunch," elder brother/bassist Muff Winwood told *Rolling Stone* – plus *that* Hammond organ riff and uptempto thud will forever evoke the dancehalls of 1966.

Traffic, Blind Faith and mainstream 80s stardom beckoned for Stevie; *Gimme Some Lovin'* remains the feelgood period track of choice for soundtrack compilers (*The Blues Brothers*, *Good Morning Vietnam*, *Notting Hill*) ad men (er, *Activia Yoghurt*) and the all-night runners of the continuing mod revival. **JK**

Donovan

SUNSHINE SUPERMAN

Epic, August 26, 1966

A classic early psych pop trip, this album was initially released in the US only. It contained a star-studded cast, including John Paul Jones and Jimmy Page who must have loved Don's occult epic *Season Of The Witch*. Predating *Revolver* and *Pet Sounds*, the album offered insight into pop royalty. *Legend Of A Girl Child Linda* was about Brian Jones's ex-girlfriend, and *The Fat Angel* was an homage to Mama Cass. It took Donovan to the top table and nipped in the bud the notion that he was a second-rate Dylan copyist. The Beatles were hugely impressed, partly because Donovan always had the best weed and was the first high-profile British pop star to be arrested for cannabis possession. Good day sunshine. **MB**

Bob Dylan

BLONDE ON BLONDE

CBS, August 20, 1966

From the Salvation Army brass in *Rainy Day Women #12 & 35* to the funereal end of *Sad Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands*, this album is where folk rock grew up, as Dylan replaced any lingering jangle with the immaculate virtuosity of his new Nashville session muso pals. There was playfulness to *Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat* balanced by *Just Like A Woman*, which managed to be dirty, misogynistic and deeply tender. The rulebook ripped up, the news was out: everybody must get stoned. The Beatles, whose *Revolver* came out a week earlier, felt compelled to up their game yet again with *Penny Lane/Strawberry Fields Forever*. This sense of one-upmanship was the single most vital driving force in all the great records made in 1966. **MB**

The Easybeats

FRIDAY ON MY MIND

United Artists single, November 17, 1966

The Easybeats were definitive proof that the burgeoning rock movement was a global phenomenon. Inspired by The Beatles, the quintet were at the vanguard of a new wave of guitar-driven Oz pop. *Friday On My Mind*, an effusive hymn to hedonism marked by a nagging guitar motif, was their eighth single but the first to register on an international scale. Every Oz band since – from AC/DC and Radio Birdman to The Saints and The Birthday Party – owes it a debt. As further testament to its durability, in 2001 the Australasian Performing Rights Association voted it the best Australian song of all time. **RH**

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Grateful Dead: under the influence.

GETTY

The Electric Prunes

I HAD TOO MUCH TO DREAM LAST NIGHT

Reprise single, November 1966

Few songs embodied the changing face of 60s pop like the Prunes' second single. From its backwards guitar intro to its shivery effects, primal boom and fuzztone riff, it was at once experimental and giddy with the commercial possibilities of psychedelia. *I Had Too Much To Dream* was a major US hit, ushering in a new age of populist acid-rock. It later became the lead track on 1972's *Nuggets* compilation. **RH**

The Fugs

THE FUGS

ESP-Disk, March 1966

Dispensing with the normal conventions of pop music, the New Yorkers' second LP was the result of a deal with ESP-Disk that allowed them free use of an Off-Broadway theatre packed with state-of-the-art gear. They duly concocted a dizzying mix of avant-rock, jazz, experimental noise and biting satire, their wild imaginings made all the more anarchic by their habit of bouncing back and forth between four- and two-track machines. More radical and politically charged than their West Coast counterparts (anti-Vietnam War tirade *Kill For Peace* being a case in point), this album was the jump-off point for US alt.rock. **RH**

Grateful Dead

LIVE BOOTLEG (JAN '66)

Bootleg cassette, January 8, 1966

A rare recording from a Merry Pranksters 'acid test' in which a commune of travelling beatniks took a collective LSD trip, this event took place when the drug was still legal in the US.

Considering they were all under the influence, the Dead's performance was surprisingly lucid. *I'm A Hog For You Baby* saw founder members Jerry Garcia and Pigpen handling the anarchy exploding in their minds. The six-song tape also includes some imminent Dead favourites: the super-fast guitar and harmonica vamp *Caution: Do Not Stop On Tracks* and *Death Don't Have No Mercy*. A social document as much as a musical moment, the concert ended when the chief of police pulled the power and chief Prankster Ken Kesey filmed and directed the ensuing insanity. It finished with a reference to The Star Spangled Banger (sic) and more mindless chaos. You could get a contact high just by listening to this. The Grateful Dead had arrived and everything turned Day-Glo. **MB**

The Great!! Society!!

SOMEONE TO LOVE

Northbeach, February 1966

Written by Darby Slick and sung by his sister-in-law Grace Slick (her hubby Jerry is on drums), this original version of the future Jefferson Airplane hit was a true-life story about waking up after an acid trip and finding that your girlfriend spent the night with another man.

Recorded in November '65 it was arguably the very first San Francisco psychedelic track. Released on Northbeach Records while Sylvester Stewart (aka Sly Stone) hovered in the background, this piece was shrouded in mystery: Stone didn't produce it; Grace wasn't named as the singer; there were exclamation marks in the group's name; and the song wasn't yet called *Somebody To Love*. A longer live version recorded at The Matrix club followed thereafter but the original has all the charm.

Once installed as lead singer in Jefferson Airplane, Grace Slick picked up where she left off, taking this and *White Rabbit* with her, and spearheading a new commercial era for San Francisco acts. **MB**

Tim Hardin

TIM HARDIN 1

Verve Folkways, July 1, 1966

The man Bob Dylan once called "the greatest songwriter alive" and Joe Strummer deemed a "lost genius" was a troubled soul and already in the grip of drug addiction at 23; a Pacific-West greenback trying to fit in with the Greenwich Village folk scene.

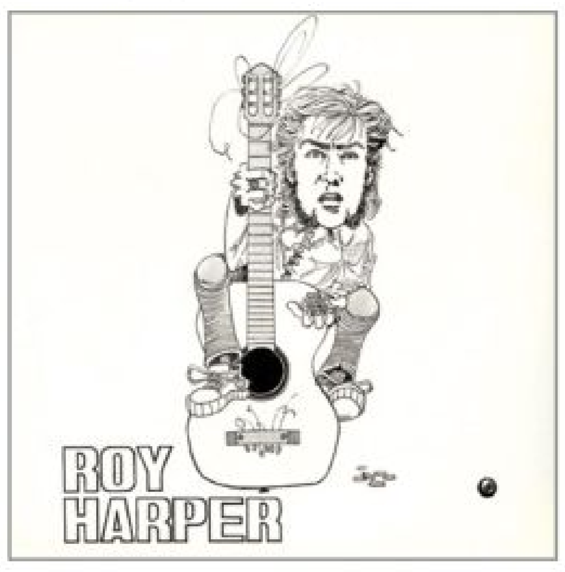
Dropped by Columbia Records after failing to impress them with his demo sessions and his wayward behaviour, jazz label Verve welcomed Hardin, whose warm tenor vibrato had struggled to compete with the flat folk dialect of his peers.

On this debut album, Hardin's songs shone as works of confessional catharsis, and he began to get radio play, if not hits. The standout *Reason To Believe* – a tender hymn to unrequited love, but finding 'reason to believe' – lived on outside the folk scene with Rod Stewart's sympathetic 1971 cover spotlighting a style later followed by such melancholy rock romantics as Rufus Wainwright and Mark Lanegan. **JK**

Roy Harper

SOPHISTICATED BEGGAR

Strike, July 1966



Folk singer-songwriter Roy Harper's debut album was a limited-edition release, which he advertised by handing out flyers on Oxford Street before playing his poetry/acoustic songs in Greek Street folk club Les Cousins backed by a Revox tape machine. *Sophisticated Beggar* was recorded by his friend, producer Pierre Tubbs, in Harper's living room, and described by its maker as a "wild journey into deepest space".

The results were worth the effort, especially the electric rock song *Committed* (*very* Syd Barrett) and *October The Twelfth*. Jimmy Page and Robert Plant were zealous Harper fans, and studied his neat fingerpicking and quixotic lyrics – an approach as far removed from pop as it was possible to get. **MB**

The Kinks: dedicated creators of fashion.

THE KINKS

DEDICATED FOLLOWER OF FASHION / FACE TO FACE

Pye single, February 2, 1966 / *Pye, October 28, 1966*

Having dipped their toes into more observational songwriting with 1965's *Where Have All The Good Times Gone*, 1966 found The Kinks taking a full plunge into the style that would carry them through the next five years and yield some of the greatest storytelling ever in pop and rock. With his lyrics Ray Davies created satirical vignettes that put a mirror up to the era and to London life with songs such as the single *Dedicated Follower Of Fashion*, a Vaudevillian battle cry inspired by a fight with a fashion designer at a party and a dig at the Carnaby Street culture that the band had once helped promote.

The Kinks perfected this approach with their fourth album, *Face To Face*, whose defining track, *Sunny Afternoon*, was written under the influence of Sinatra, Glenn Miller, Dylan and Bach. A cutting take on fat cats and tax men, it showed popular rock songs could fix a gimlet eye upon society and politics as well as sex, drugs and rock'n'roll. Suddenly, a whole new avenue had opened up. **JK**

"NOTHING WAS TOO WEIRD"

The Kinks' Dave Davies looks back on the year that changed everything.

How was 1966 for you?
Wonderful. We couldn't do a thing wrong. Nothing was too weird and it was a very spontaneous time.

What influenced you in sixty-six?
Fashion, art and this incredible explosion of movies; people like Tom Courtney and Albert Finney gave us a new set of heroes on screen.

Everyone seemed to influence each other.
In a way. But we never talked about music. We kept our ideas very close to our chest.

A bit of rivalry, then.
There certainly was, yeah. But I think The Beatles secretly loved The Kinks.

> "There was a bit of rivalry. But I think The Beatles secretly loved The Kinks."
> **Dave Davies**

Even when *Sunny Afternoon* knocked *Paperback Writer* off the Number One spot?
Ha! It was healthy competition. It made our songwriting more prolific, and we were very into being part of the southern scene alongside the Stones, Yardbirds and Downliners Sect.

You were the poster boy for the era.
I think everyone copied The Kinks. We were always into fashion. I used to love the Charles II outfits – braided frock coats, frilly shirts, boots. I always thought my girlfriends dressed better than the guys did so I used to copy their style.

In the promo film for *Sunny Afternoon* you're playing a Flying V. This sparked a trend.
That wasn't premeditated – I went to America and the airline lost my guitar. So I went to a pawn shop, and they had a Flying V there for two hundred bucks. It was a happy accident.

Which other bands fluffed your ruffles in 1966?
I really liked The Move. The Hollies were very important, too. They were really supportive. They helped us a lot with vocal harmonies. When we went in the studio we used to stand around a mic and sing, we didn't know what we were doing.

And which was the best album of that year?
I was a big fan of The Byrds' *Fifth Dimension* and both Lovin' Spoonful albums. They were very key to me and the way I'd look at my own songwriting.

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REX

Love: every month was 'Movember' in 1966.

Jimi Hendrix

HEY JOE

Polydor single, December 16, 1966

Hendrix's arrival in London in September 1966 sent shockwaves through the capital's musical community. Like some left-handed guitar-playing James Bond, women wanted to be with him, and men – especially Eric Clapton – wanted to *be* him. The culmination of this summer of madness was Hendrix's debut single. *Hey Joe* was a murder ballad, previously recorded by US folkie Tim Rose. The story of a man who shoots his 'cheatin' ol' lady' and flees to Mexico was blunter than anything by supposed bad boys The Who or the Rolling Stones. But initially *Hey Joe*, with its gospel backing vocal 'oohs' and 'aahs', pottered along like a regular pop song. Then, around the 1:27 mark, Mitch Mitchell's busy drumming and Hendrix's increasingly fervent vocals and stun-gun guitar took it somewhere new. *Hey Joe* is an exercise in menace and understatement; every slow-burn hard rock song of the 1970s and beyond squeezed into three-and-a-half peerless minutes. **MBl**

The Incredible String Band

THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND

Elektra, June 1966

Before they became avatars of acid-folk, ISB recorded this sublime debut that served to loosen British folk from its traditional constraints. Or at least free it from the tap rooms and cellars of its prime habitat. It was the band's only album to feature the original trio of Clive Palmer, Robin Williamson and Mike Heron, each member favouring their own guitar-led songs over traditional material, framed by delicate touches of mandolin and banjo. The result was a minimalist masterpiece. Dylan declared himself a fan (singling out Williamson's *October Song* for special praise), and Robert Plant would later cite ISB as a major influence. **RH**

Skip James

TODAY

Vanguard, March, 1966

The oldest artist to appear in this round-up, Nehemiah Curtis 'Skip' James was a Delta blues guitarist/songwriter, who was rediscovered in the mid-60s by John Fahey and Canned Heat's Henry Vestine and Al Wilson, who found Skip dossing in a Mississippi hospital and suffering from the DTs.

Vanguard Records put Skip into their New York studio and taped him in full flight on the depression-era *Hard Time Killing Floor Blues*, as well as cheerier pieces *My Gal* and *I'm So Glad*. A huge influence on Canned Heat (James was the model for Wilson's high vocal style) his music was a welcome antidote to the more familiar Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters. **MB**

Bert Jansch

JACK ORION

Transatlantic, September 1966

Scottish-born Jansch recorded this, his third album, for Transatlantic (the British equivalent of Elektra) with his friend John Renbourn adding guitar, while producer Bill Leader ran the machine and rolled the joints on what might be construed as a dry run for Pentangle. Key moments included *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face* and Jansch's ornate banjo picking on *The Waggoner's Lad*. Taken on its own, *Jack Orion* was a remarkable example of fluid British guitar genius, but when placed in context it made a huge impact on Jimmy Page, Nick Drake, Donovan and Jethro Tull. Led Zeppelin adapted *Blackwaterside* as *Black Mountain Side* on their debut using the Jansch/Anne Briggs arrangement and didn't even say thank you. **MB**

Jefferson Airplane

TAKES OFF

RCA, August 15, 1966

Before Grace Slick, Jefferson Airplane had Signe Toly Anderson who had a startling contralto and sang while pregnant. Blessed with psychedelic godfathers Marty Balin and Paul Kantner, the band also included Skip Spence and future Hot Tuna wizards Jack Casady and Jorma Kaukonen. Heavy acid users like their friends in the Grateful Dead, the Airplane caught the counterculture mood with the barely disguised trippery of *Run Around*, the sexually charged *Let Me In* and the archetypal hippie anthem *Let's Get Together*, written by Quicksilver Messenger Service's Chester Powers. Forebears of the acid revolution, the band blended intricate vocals alongside Kaukonen's guitar solos. *Crawdaddy!* magazine hailed *Takes Off* as the "most important album of American rock" that year. **MB**

Love

LOVE

Elektra, March 1966

DA CAPO

Elektra, November 1966

They could have been called Hate, given the insidious menace of their prettiest melodies. Love's deftest songs captured the sunshine essence of the Summer Of Love while offering portends of 1969 and all that. Their debut showcased their schizoid tendencies, ranging from guitarist Bryan MacLean's delicate *Softly To Me* to mainman Arthur Lee's stark drug addict's lament *Signed D.C.* The gentle foreboding of *Mushroom Clouds* anticipated the apocalyptic thunder of the second album's *7 And 7 Is*. Both albums opened with some Burt Bacharach worship. But Love's *My Little Red Book* swapped the suave fury of the original for punky venom, while *Stephanie Knows Who* was practically a rewrite of *What's New Pussycat?*.

On *Da Capo* they upped the florid ante with *Orange Skies* and *She Comes In Colors*. *Revelation* was a side-long blues jam with shades of *Goin' Home* from the Rolling Stones' recently released *Aftermath*. The real revelation was that Love, prophets without the commercial honour they deserved, had already been performing it live for a year. **PL**

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The Monkees: the prefab four.

The Lovin' Spoonful

DAYDREAM

Kama Sutra single, March 1966

HUMS OF THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL

Kama Sutra, November 1966

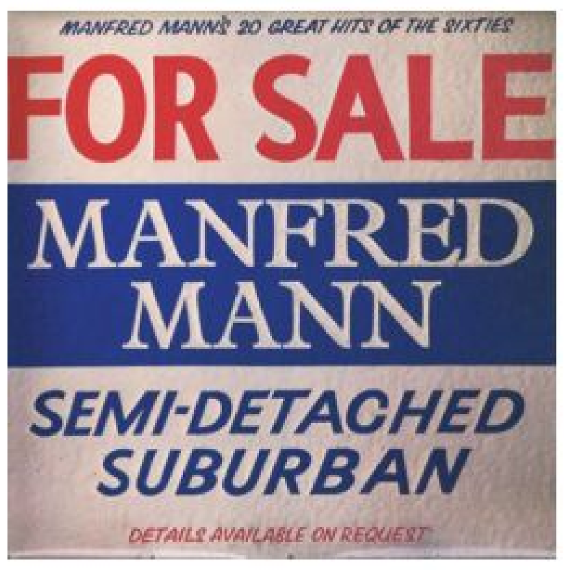
"I can't imagine a better time to be writing songs and making music than 1966," said Lovin' Spoonful founder John Sebastian. "It was a high-water mark. Part of the excitement was the competition. You just had to look around at Brian Wilson and Lennon And McCartney and John Loudermilk and all these Nashville writers and go: 'I'm never going to kick this guy's ass!'"

But that year, Sebastian did just that, with a legacy-making five US Top 10 singles including *Summer In The City* and *Daydream*, and two hit albums that rivalled *Pet Sounds* and *Revolver* in their dazzling creative scope. Even more significantly, by filtering his literate, witty songcraft through an eclectic prism of rock'n'roll, country, folk, blues, jug band, Tin Pan Alley and whatever else grabbed his fancy, Sebastian showed us the future shape of popular music: a gloriously shaggy mutt. **BdM**

Manfred Mann

SEMI-DETACHED SUBURBAN MR JAMES

Fontana single, November 21, 1966



Manfred Mann might not have been the greatest British pop group ever, but they were one of the smartest. Although *Semi-Detached Suburban Mr James* wasn't as successful as their UK No.1 single *Pretty Flamingo* (released earlier in 1966, and a swansong for their original singer Paul Jones), this tongue-in-cheek tale of being jilted by a dolly bird for a boring yet wealthy suitor was every bit as witty as The Kinks' social observations and came on like a less pretentious *A Day In The Life*. Not only was it the first big hit to feature a Mellotron, it also found new vocalist Mike D'Abo coming on like a proto-Bowie as he sang about nappies on the line, morning toast dutifully buttered and boring sex with hubby. Even in an era of groundbreaking production, Shel Talmy's multi-tracking in mono was spellbinding, prefiguring progressive rock by nearly half a decade. **MB**

The Lovin' Spoonful: dazzling and creative.

'The Monkees struggled to free themselves from the corporate machine that created them.'

The Monkees

I'M A BELIEVER/(I'M NOT YOUR) STEPPING STONE

Colgems single, November 12, 1966

Never mind that none of them actually played instruments on it, Neil Diamond's *I'm A Believer* was the single that rubber-stamped The Monkees as international superstars, selling over 10 million copies. The song's success may have proved that prefab pop could be just as valid as the real thing, given the right presentation and capable session players, but the lyrics of its B-side – a cover of Boyce and Hart's *(I'm Not Your) Steppin' Stone*, later covered by the Sex Pistols – can be taken as an early indicator of the band struggling to free themselves from the corporate machine that had created them. **RH**

The Move

NIGHT OF FEAR

Deram single, December 9, 1966

As Birmingham's post-war industry and economy flourished, Brumbeat blossomed into decadent psychedelia. With The Who as their template, The Move formed from several prominent local players – Roy Wood, Trevor Burton, Ace Kefford, Bev Bevan and Carl Wayne – with a shared urge to push the R&B scene forward. The Move's schtick was a violent, flamboyant stage show, their music a multi-textured melodic pop built upon Wood's love of classical music. *Night Of Fear* aimed to flip switched-on minds with a strident hook taken from Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*.

A benchmark for heavy, metallic sounds and classically influenced prog, The Move would also give birth to the globe-conquering Electric Light Orchestra and Wood's long-running solo career. Still, you have to wonder what would have happened if a certain John Bonham hadn't turned down the vacant drum stool in 1965. **JK**

The Music Machine

TALK TALK

Original Sound single, November 1966

The LA combo downtuned their guitars a whole step to create the atonal effect that gave their debut single its sinister appeal. Hitched to snapping drums and growling vocals, it was a garage-punk crossover hit that satisfied singer Sean Bonniwell's intention to bring "something completely unique" to the US charts. Kudos too to engineer Paul Ruff, whose use of new 10-track technology gave it a depth lacking in most of their peers. The band's hoodlum sound was mirrored in their stage act, which saw them dressed all in black with matching dyed hair and, in Bonniwell's case, a single leather glove. **RH**

The Pretty Things

MIDNIGHT TO SIX MAN

Fontana single, January 15, 1966

By 1965, The Pretty Things were more subversive than their old mates the Rolling Stones; their frontman Phil May made the headlines just for having long hair. But 1966 would be a year of turmoil for the Pretties. Firebrand drummer and Keith Moon's hero Viv Prince had bowed out after committing arson on a plane. His

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replacement was the inconveniently underage Skip Alan, who was nearly impounded on a European tour. Back at home, the group were torn between guitarist Dick Taylor's passion for soul and May's rock'n'roll attitude. In an effort to, as Taylor said, "construct something different, something weird", *Midnight To Six Man* was a compromise, ditching the 12-bar format for some mod-punk buccaneering. Their next song, *LSD*, would gain more publicity, but *Midnight* would shape the next phase of garage rock: Flamin' Groovies, the Medway scene, The Strypes and beyond. **JK**

Question Mark & The Mysterians

96 TEARS

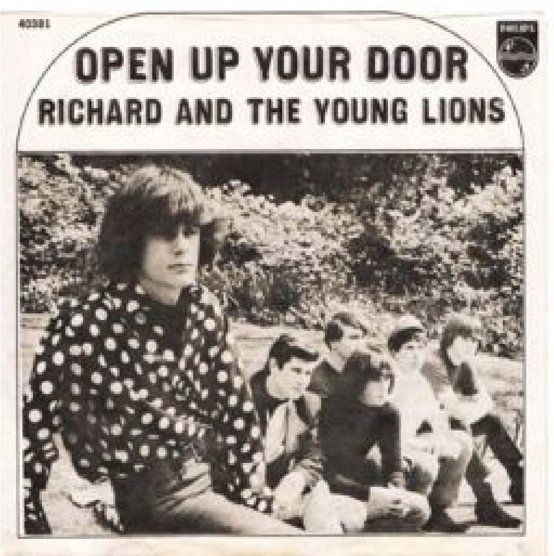
Pa-Go-Go single, October 1966

It's the ultimate punk origin story: Hispanic teens whose parents work in Michigan car factories form a garage band, take their name from a Japanese sci-fi flick (singer Question Mark claims he's a space alien), play local dances, cut a one-take single in the back of a beauty shop, hand-deliver 45s to radio stations, and overcome everything from racism to record business logic to top the national chart. *96 Tears* (numerically flipped because the band worried the original title was too dirty) survives not only as the proto-punk anthem, but also a textbook example of what the DIY spirit can accomplish. Unfortunately their story also doubles as a cautionary tale. The Mysterians made the classic mistake of signing away the copyright of their signature tune. **BdM**

Richard And The Young Lions

OPEN UP YOUR DOOR

Phillips single, July 1966



"The haircut is strictly Anglo-Saxon, late Beowulf or early Prince Valiant," an observer noted while admiring frontman Richard Tepp's magnificent mane. Tepp was a one-man Pretty Things who banged his tambourine as if Mick Jagger and Brian Jones had warped into one in his febrile imagination. Musos might tell you the Lions' debut was notable for its African djembe percussion and fuzz bass, but, more importantly, this New Jersey mob had a throbbing sound that got the go-go dancers squirming. The holy grail of US punk rock singles, *Open Up Your Door* was a wonderfully filthy demand for physical proximity that scraped into the US Top 100 but topped many regional charts, including Detroit.

Motown offered them a deal to become the label's first white act, but the Lions couldn't break their Phillips contract. The Yardbirds tried bringing them to Britain, and that didn't happen either. Still, in the year of the beast, Richard was rampant. **MB**

OTIS: GETTY

Otis Redding: a force of nature.

66 FROM '66

OTIS REDDING

COMPLETE & UNBELIEVABLE: THE OTIS REDDING DICTIONARY OF SOUL

Volt/Atlantic, October 15, 1966

Often cited as the finest album ever made in Memphis. Otis Redding didn't hold back when he stepped into a studio. He was backed by Booker T & The MG's (Booker T Jones, Steve Cropper, Donald 'Duck' Dunn and Al Jackson Jr), plus young pianist Isaac Hayes and the Memphis Horns.

High-voltage vocals aside, Redding's craft as an interpreter was second to none. He wrote his own super-difficult horn lines in the studio and, such was his commitment, famously lost pounds in weight while recording his music.

His choice of songs on *Complete & Unbelievable* was unparalleled. He took old Tin Pan Alley standard *Try A Little Tenderness* (updating both the Aretha Franklin gospel version and Sam Cooke's supper-club treatment) and *Tennessee Waltz*, a hokey country standard popularised by Patti Page, and sat them next to an electrifying version of The Beatles' *Day Tripper* without missing a beat.

The first example of modern soul, *Complete & Unbelievable* inspired Redding's protégé Arthur Conley, Marvin Gaye, The Temptations and Stevie Wonder – and paved the way for the new cosmic R&B. Although it was not his biggest-selling album (that accolade belonged to 1965's *Otis Blue*), it enhanced Redding's reputation to the extent that he was soon recognised as one of the greatest singers on the planet.

Redding's appeal was also far reaching: white rock audiences revered his records (his appearance at 1967's Monterey Pop Festival was as pivotal as Hendrix's) and the Rolling Stones and The Beatles frequently cited him as a hero. Paul McCartney was particularly impressed by Redding's *Day Tripper*, and his future wife, Linda Eastman, photographed the singer playing acoustic guitar and pulling an Elvis Presley pose.

Redding was a native of Macon, Georgia, and one of the reasons why the Allman Brothers relocated there. They too were smitten by *Complete & Unbelievable* and played it non-stop while making their 1967 debut under the name The Hour Glass.

The rock and soul axis became the norm thereafter. Both the Grateful Dead and, later, the Black Crowes covered Redding's 1968 hit *Hard To Handle*; he was name-checked by The Doors in *Runnin' Blue*; Steely Dan called Otis *'the king of soul'* on *Hey Nineteen;* Talking Heads borrowed *Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa (Sad Song)* for their new wave Stax-Volt homage *Psycho Killer*.

Redding was a force of nature, whose sheer presence shone throughout. The album's producer, Jim Stewart, summed him up like so: "Otis was like a magic potion. When he walked in, the studio lit up and all the worries and problems just vanished. You knew something good was going to happen. He was totally creative. Everybody wanted to be there when Otis walked in. It was like magic." **MB**

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The Rolling Stones: silly young men.

THE ROLLING STONES

AFTERMATH / PAINT IT BLACK

Decca, April 15, 1966 *Decca single, May 6, 1966*

In January 1966, Rolling Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham announced the title of their next album: Could You Walk On Water? Decca Records, the Stones' paymasters, were disgusted. They could tolerate the Stones' long hair and antisocial behaviour – just. But poking fun at Christianity and Jesus's miracles/party tricks was a bridge too far. The Stones had to back down. When the album appeared in April, it had the less inflammatory title, *Aftermath*.

The sentiment, however, remained. *Aftermath* and the single *Paint It Black* (first released as *Paint It, Black* due to an error) is the Rolling Stones spitting venom at everyone and everything. Mick Jagger turned 23 in 1966. But these songs about depression and feckless ex-girlfriends suggested the work of cynical middle-aged men. How did the Stones become so bitter?

There's a case to be made for *Aftermath* as the first autobiographical rock album. It was the Stones' fourth studio release but the first comprised solely of Jagger/Richards compositions, most of which offered a brutally candid glimpse of the world they now inhabited.

Work on *Aftermath* began in December '65 at Hollywood's RCA Studios, 48 hours after another back-breaking US tour. This, then, was the sound of grotty tour buses, grottier motels and piss-stained dressing rooms; a daily grind only alleviated by pills, booze and faceless knee-tremblers. The band were also splitting into two camps. As Jagger and guitarist Richards's songwriting partnership flourished, founder/guitarist Brian Jones became sidelined.

The tension was palpable in the studio. In one corner was the purist Jones, desperate to maintain the Stones' blues credibility; in another, Jagger and Richards, determined for them to become a fully fledged rock'n'roll band.

> 'This was the sound of grotty tour buses, grotty dressing rooms and faceless knee-tremblers.'

When the Stones landed another hit with *19th Nervous Breakdown* in February '66, the pendulum swung firmly in Mick and Keith's favour. What *Aftermath* and *Paint It Black* (included on the US version of the album) shared with *19th Nervous Breakdown* was a collectively nasty, uptight Englishness.

Aftermath is a new kind of 'blues' refracted through the Stones' jaundiced world view. On *Paint It Black* they want to quash any light, colour or happiness. On *Under My Thumb*, *High And Dry* and *Stupid Girl*, every woman (including supposedly Jagger's ex Chrissie Shrimpton) is either irredeemably foolish, not to be trusted or both. *Aftermath*'s misogyny is staggering. Although, on reflection, it also suggests silly young men, thousands of miles from home, missing their mums and a nice cuppa.

Furthermore, despite *Aftermath*'s cold nihilism there was still the dainty ballad *Lady Jane*, and Brian Jones's instrumental flair to sweeten the pill. The drug-addled Jones might have been on the way out, but his use of dulcimer, marimba and (on *Paint It Black*) a sitar suggests his musical faculties were still intact.

The Stones broke new ground with *Aftermath*. This was X-rated pop designed to upset everyone, but with a musical nous that established its creators as true rivals to The Beatles. A UK No.1 and a US No.2, it proved the Stones' worth better than anything before. By the end of 1966, many would believe the Stones really could walk on water. **MBl**

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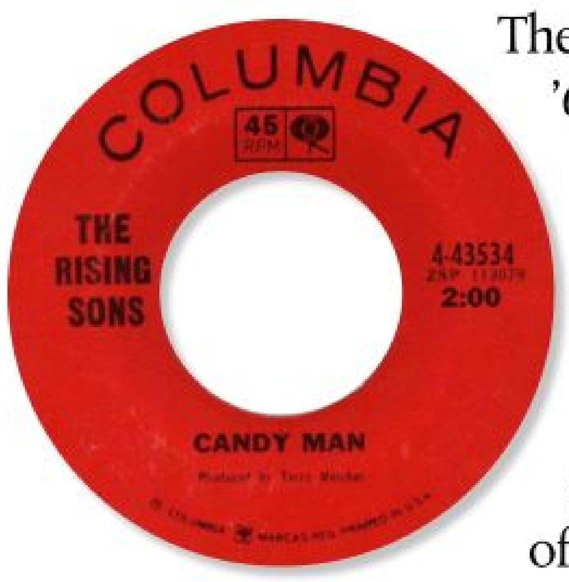
The Rising Sons

CANDY MAN

Columbia single, February 1966

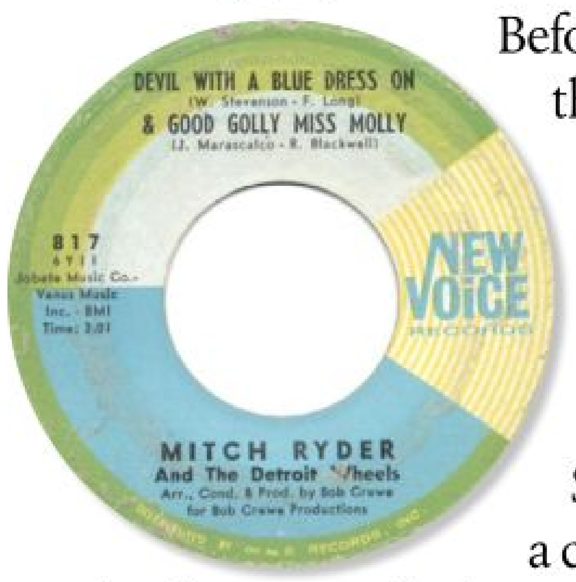


The only officially released '66 example of this pre-supergroup (Taj Mahal, Ry Cooder, Gary Marker, Jesse Lee Kincaid and Kevin Kelley) was a jolly paean to the delights of purchasing drugs, or 'candy', in New Orleans. For a split second the Rising Sons' accomplished blues and country folk rock might have been as popular as The Byrds or Moby Grape. Instead they became more important after they disbanded. Their blend of Taj's blues, Marker's progressive jazz and Cooder's ability to play the entire guitar family paved the way for a new spirit of eclecticism: Americana before it officially existed. Plus, their split meant we got Taj Mahal and Cooder's solo careers and Kelley's part in The Byrds' country revival, and their original drummer Ed Cassidy went on to form Spirit – so that's four bands for the price of one. **MB**

Mitch Ryder And The Detroit Wheels

DEVIL WITH A BLUE DRESS ON

New Voice single, September 1966



Before the J Geils Band there was Detroit's Mitch Ryder and his blue-eyed soul assault on all the senses. Fusing the Shorty Long/William Stevenson original with a cheeky swipe from *Good Golly Miss Molly*, this was Michigan punk rock incarnate. Jim McCarty's guitar work and producer Bob Crewe's brittle production were the backbone for Ryder's no-holds-barred energy, which in turn borrowed from The Young Rascals' *Good Lovin'* released six months earlier. This single used to slay them in the Motor City and it stands up as an R&B classic today. Ryder was a significant influence on the young Bruce Springsteen, who heard this No.4 hit and vowed one day he would be a rock'n'roll star. **MB**

The Seeds

THE SEEDS

GNP Crescendo, April 1966

The quintessential US garage band, The Seeds styled themselves as the juvenile long-haired delinquents of the LA scene, their outrider status sealed by a fondness for Victorian dandy *and* Native American clobber.

Led by Sky Saxon, simplicity was the key to this belligerent debut. Saxon mewled like a malevolent cat, Jan Savage chopped away on fuzz guitar and Daryl Hooper provided his signature organ gurgle. A huge influence on the 70s punk scene, the album contained a pair of classic 45s – *Can't Seem To Make You Mine* and *Pushin' Too Hard* – that were direct antecedents of rock music's brutalist DIY ethic. **RH**

Simon & Garfunkel

SOUNDS OF SILENCE

Columbia, January 17, 1966

'Hello darkness my old friend…' might have doubled as an epitaph for Simon & Garfunkel in late 1965. Their debut album *Wednesday Morning, 3 AM* had flopped; its single, *The Sound Of Silence* drowned out by Beatlemania. Simon moved to England, and Garfunkel returned to college to study architecture. Oblivion beckoned.

In their absence, producer Tom Wilson added an electric backing track to the single, and it went to No.1. Taking the cue, S&G's plugged-in second album added more caffeine to their coffeehouse sound. Here were jangly 12-string guitars and echoey backbeats propelling folk-rock into the mainstream, and fathering a rich artistic line: from CSNY to REM to Sufjan Stevens and beyond. **BdM**

Small Faces

SMALL FACES

Decca, May 6, 1966

ALL OR NOTHING

Decca single, August 5, 1966

Summer 1966 was a fabulous time to be the Small Faces. Their self-titled debut album appeared in May; their first UK No.1, *All Or Nothing*, in September. Between them, you can trace the Faces' trajectory from dapper soul boys to whiskery hard rockers. In one corner, there's the debut's big hit *Sha La La La Lee*, a glorious pop song co-written by Bruce Forsyth's future golfing buddy, singer/actor Kenny Lynch. In another, the acid flashback *E Too D*, with its slashing guitar and singer Steve Marriott recalling a recent LSD trip: *'I just can't stop ma brain from runnin' wild…' All Or Nothing* found a sweet spot between the two extremes: merging that same slashing guitar with Ian McLagan's soul-revue Hammond organ and Marriott's yearning, heartfelt chorus with his bandmates' hooligan backing vocals. It was a No.1 hit that signposted the Small Faces' growing stature as songwriters and accidental inventors of heavy rock. **MBl**

The Sonics

BOOM

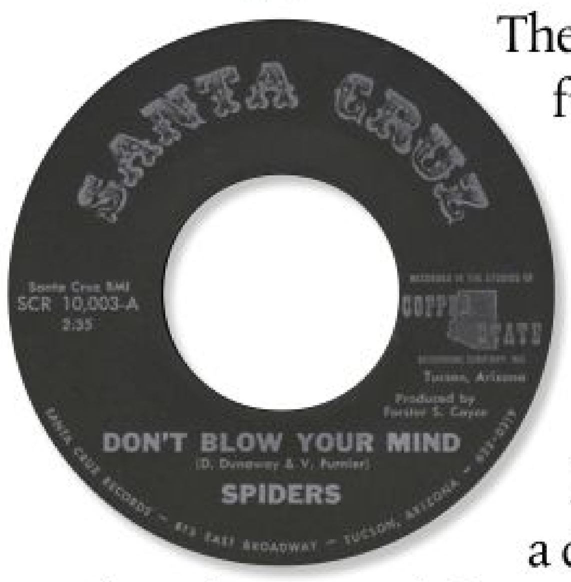
Etiquette, February 1966

The Sonics made no secret of the fact that they weren't the greatest technicians. Instead the Tacoma five-piece's musical deficiencies became a strength, as they ramped up the volume and tore at their instruments like pack dogs on a hunt. Topped off by vocalist Gerry Roslie's scarifying yelp, their combative approach made them a must-see attraction on the 60s Washington ballroom scene. This second album sired some of the most savage rock'n'roll ever to come out of America, with a can-do attitude that would later inform the work of acolytes including The Cramps, Dead Kennedys, Nirvana and the White Stripes. Not for nothing did Jack White call them "the epitome of sixties punk". **RH**

The Spiders

DON'T BLOW YOUR MIND

Santa Cruz single, March 1966



The debut single by the future Alice Cooper, or 18-year-old Vincent Furnier as he was in 1966. Furnier composed *Don't Blow Your Mind* and its flip, *No Price Tag*, sitting in a dark room at his mother's house with future Alice bassist Dennis Dunaway. With the burning Phoenix sun on their backs The Spiders opted to emulate wan and woebegone Brits such as The Yardbirds (Vincent was a big fan of their vocalist Keith Relf). Guitarist Glen Buxton added the thrash to this local No.1 hit. Though barely competent, the band bluffed their way through with punk abandon. he Spiders were soon swapped for snakes and the rest was history. **MB**

The Standells

DIRTY WATER

Tower/Capitol single, November 1965

Despite coming from LA, The Standells became synonymous with Boston after producer Ed Cobb's satirical ode to its polluted harbour and river. First issued in late '65, it became a major hit in spring '66 and a definitive proto-punk anthem, shored up by the band's reputation as sullen rebels with pre-Ramones fringes and Carnaby Street-style threads. A double-tracked kick drum provided the beat, Tony Valentino – playing a Fender through a classic Vox amp – created one of the most durable garage riffs, and singer Dick Dodd snarled out lines about lovers, muggers, thieves and frustrated women like a teenage delinquent on the make. **RH**

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Ike & Tina Turner, with Phil Spector, [illegible] sweet [illegible] music.

significant. The brainchild of Manfred Mann singer Paul Jones, other participants were Steve Winwood (billed as Steve Anglo), Jack Bruce and Pete York, thus sewing the seeds for Cream and Blind Faith: The Powerhouse was the first studio-only 'supergroup'.

While the album sold moderately, it pointed the way forward for Clapton who laid down *Crossroads* and *Steppin' Out* (recorded and played live by Cream and John Mayall's Bluesbreakers). There was also an introduction to the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Tom Rush and Al Kooper. Elektra had gone electric and the rock sampler was born. **MB**

The 13th Floor Elevators

THE PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS OF THE 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS

International Artists, November 18, 1966

Was this the first album to specifically mention the word 'psychedelic'? Was it The Deep's *Psychedelic Moods*, or Blues Magoos' *Psychedelic Lollipop?*

Whatever, LSD-taking was rampant in America and the Elevators were prime disciples. Lead singer and Texan maniac Roky Erickson inspired a generation of druggy punks a decade later as this cult album, with Tommy Hall's absurd electric jug playing driving the hit *You're Gonna Miss Me*, was passed around like a furtively revered manuscript. Especially so in Liverpool where the Teardrop Explodes were avid converts. R.E.M., Primal Scream, The Jesus And Mary Chain and ZZ Top acknowledged the Elevators' influence, Robert Plant borrowed Roky's feral vocal style, and stoner rockers like Queens Of The Stone Age and Wooden Shjips wouldn't be droning on without them. **MB**

The Troggs

WILD THING

Fontana single, April 20, 1966

Three chords, two takes and one bizarre wind instrument. That's all it took for Andover's Troggs to record one of the best-known rock songs of all time, and become globally recognised after just two singles.

Under the guidance of Kinks manager Larry Page – who had heard the Chip Taylor original as a demo in New York – *Wild Thing* was destined to be a throwaway B-side for the group, but they delivered a recording of such brilliant, neanderthal simplicity – and turned around follow-up *With A Girl Like You* in the same ten-minute window – that all bets were off. The establishment hated it, but the kids adored its unpolished, sexual undercurrent.

Dozens of cover versions subsequently emerged, most famously Jimi Hendrix's incendiary performance of it at Monterey in '67 as he smashed up his Fender Strat and set it alight. Surely *Wild Thing* is the ultimate garage-punk anthem and the spark for the Stooges, Ramones, White Stripes – and that bunch of long-haired louts currently pulverising guitars and bin lids somewhere in your town *right now*. **JK**

Ike & Tina Turner

RIVER DEEP – MOUNTAIN HIGH

Philles single, May 1966

Soul music from the days when R&B rocked, this was an eruption of voice and music as heavy as any metal. Sheer erotic overload, no wonder Tina Turner had to remove her sweat-drenched shirt to sing in her bra after toiling through thousands of takes.

The price of this Wagnerian masterpiece, an epic expansion of The Wall Of Sound, was huge: 21 session musicians and 21 backing vocalists costing a then-unprecedented $22,000. So, too, was the toll: producer Phil Spector considered it his greatest work, and yet it turned out to be virtually his swansong, its commercial failure at least in the States – too black for the white rock demographic, too pop for soul fans – prompting a withdrawal from centre stage. The coda we know: mythic protagonist of his own psychodrama hits self-destruct button and winds up in jail. Still, this remains: what George Harrison deemed "a perfect record from start to finish". **PL**

Various Artists

WHAT'S SHAKIN

Elektra, June 1966

A collaborative effort between Elektra New York and the label's new London office opened by Joe Boyd, this sampler/compilation included the Lovin' Spoonful's earliest recordings from '65, but for British audiences the appearance of Eric Clapton And The Powerhouse was more

The Who

SUBSTITUTE

Reaction single, March 1966

A QUICK ONE

Reaction, December 9, 1966

If it wasn't for *A Quick One*, The Who might have been The Action. That is to say, just another Mod band, amphetamining up American R&B until they fizzled out. But their second album was an experimental variety pack that cast lines outside of their little bullseye box – the country bounce of *Don't Look Away*, the kooky circus revelry of *Cobwebs And Strange*, the poignant jangle of *So Sad About Us* and most audaciously, the nine-minute title track, a suite of six episodic songs about infidelity, sewn together with sound effects, narration and dynamic playing. Embracing the free reign that bands had in 1966, The Who chanced upon the form – the rock opera – that would make their fortune with *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia*.

Earlier in the year, the perfect single, *Substitute*, pushed the envelope of independence a few more inches – it was the first record that Pete Townshend produced and the first after breaking with early manager/producer Shel Talmy. It also contained the controversial line *'I look all white but my dad was black,'* which continued the *'f-fade away'* spirit that would be at the heart of all their best work. **BdM**

The Velvet Underground

ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES/I'LL BE YOUR MIRROR

Verve single, July 1966

Over in New York the atmosphere couldn't be more different from the amped-up electricity everywhere else as these monochrome artrockers presented a two-pronged observation on the company they kept – Andy Warhol and his Factory filled with artists, actors and socialites on speed. While Teutonic Ice Queen Nico struggled to provide a gentle vocal on *I'll Be Your Mirror* – a pretty song that loosely addressed fandom and a search for identity, perfectly crafted

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by ex-bubblegum pop hack Lou Reed – on *All Tomorrow's Parties* her deadpan commentary on the misfit pleasure seekers really struck home. As Mo Tucker kept minimal percussive time, John Cale hammered paper-clipped piano strings and Reed teased a one-note guitar line in 'ostrich tuning' (his own invention, to make a drone noise), paisley pop went goth.

Barely of cult status at the time, the Velvets' wider legacy wouldn't hit until the 80s, as post-*Transformer* generations would discover beat poetry, Ray-Bans and jangling experimentalism over and over again. **JK**

The Yardbirds with Page (front row, left) and Beck (back row, second right).

The Yardbirds

SHAPES OF THINGS

Columbia single, March 1966

HAPPENING TEN YEARS TIME AGO

Columbia single, October 1966

With these two 45s, released just eight months apart, The Yardbirds defined the musical changes of '66. February's *Shapes Of Things* built on the blues with Chris Relf's trippy multi-tracked vocal and guitarist Jeff Beck's hammering riff and controlled feedback. It was psychedelic pop that pre-empted The Beatles' LSD-influenced *Revolver* by six months.

In October The Yardbirds took their experimentation further still on one of three songs recorded with both Beck and Jimmy Page in the line-up, and here with future Led Zeppelin man John Paul Jones playing bass. *Happenings Ten Years Time Ago* was another head-trip pop song. Its mid-section breakdown/'rave up' with police-siren guitar effects now suggests a trial run for *Whole Lotta Love*. But what clinches it is Beck and Page's jousting guitar riff: it's the sound of every twin-guitar rock band in the world being invented right there on the spot. **MBl**

'With two 45s released just eight months apart, The Yardbirds defined the musical changes of 1966.'

The Young Rascals

GOOD LOVIN'

Atlantic single, February 21, 1966

Legendary blue-eyed soul from the chart-topping Garfield, New Jersey boys, this No.1 hit was an early Arif Mardin/Tom Dowd production that featured the East Coasters in their pomp, bossing the charts from winter through summer. The absurdly infectious groove conjured by singer Felix Cavaliere, Gene Cornish, Dino Danelli and Eddie Brigati was the personification of Little Italy R&B. Here were four finger-snapping immigrant kids jumping into the melting pot with such glee that they united the States on air for months.

The song had enormous impact. Lou Reed wrote *Rock & Roll* with his old college friend Cavaliere in mind, and the Dead's Bob Weir adopted it as a West Coast anthem. Remarkably underrated, the Young Rascals were the first band to cover Dylan's *Like A Rolling Stone*. But *Good Lovin'* is the better dance tune. Ask your family doctor. **MB**

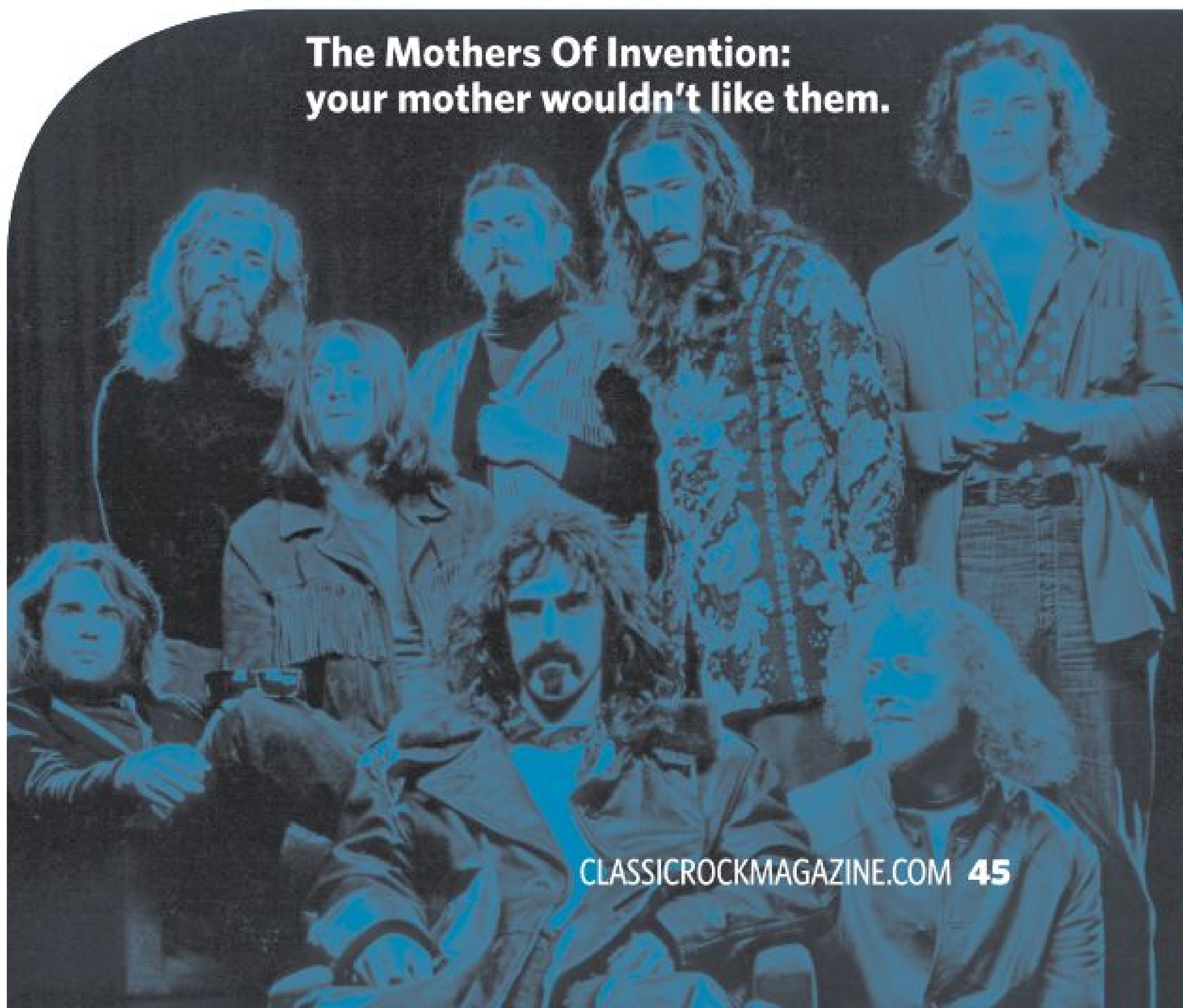
Frank Zappa

FREAK OUT!

Verve, June 27, 1966

Zappa recorded dozens of albums, and his genius for juxtaposing the puerile and profound, avant-garde experimentation with rock convention was there from the start. His compositional range was huge: sides one and two of this double included adroit attempts at doo wop (*Go Cry On Somebody Else's Shoulder*), proto-psych (*Who Are The Brain Police?*), even pop (*Wowie Zowie*, *Mother Love*).

Only the creepy subject matter (groupies, mind control) precluded The Mothers from mainstream success – producer Tom Wilson, who had previously worked with Simon & Garfunkel, mistook them for a straight white blues band. Instead, Zappa was destined to be the hyper-vigilant outsider, satirising straight society and the burgeoning counterculture from the sidelines. And this ambitious debut, released within a month of that other monumental double, *Blonde On Blonde*, was his first strike, and one of the records that gave The Beatles the impetus to create *Sgt Pepper*. **PL**



The Mothers Of Invention: your mother wouldn't like them.

GETTY X2

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THE SINGLES OF THE 60S

She's Not There

★ Zombies

It was a worldwide hit, has been covered by everyone from Santana to the UK Subs and remains a 60s classic. Not bad for the first song you ever wrote and recorded…

WORDS: WILL SIMPSON

...THERE AND BACK

For singer Colin Blunstone *She's Not There* kick-started his career twice. After the Zombies broke up in 1967, Blunstone had to be coaxed back into the music business.

"The split really did affect me. But after a while people started to contact me with regard to recording, and one of them was Mike Hurst who produced Cat Stevens's early records. Really, it all came from Mike. It was his idea to do the session, and his idea to do *She's Not There* again. Me, I was just testing the water. I wanted to see how it would feel to get back into recording again.

"Surprisingly, it was a small hit. And that did create little bit of a problem: if you've got a hit record, then you've really got to choose whether or not you're going to be involved. And I chose to go back into the business."

Ahh… 1964. It was bliss to be alive in that dawn; but to be a young British band was to be blessed with fortuity on an almost cosmic scale. The Beatles had stormed the US entertainment establishment and all of a sudden there appeared limitless possibilities for those who followed in their wake.

The Zombies, from St Albans, were perhaps the epitome of the British Invasion group, who through a combination of good timing, luck and one all-time classic managed to stake their place in rock history.

The classic in question was a haunting, piano-led song that instantly struck deeper than the Mersey-flavoured pop of the time. It should have set up Rod Argent, Colin Blunstone and co. for a career as long and rewarding as that of contemporaries like the Kinks or the Stones. Instead, within three years, disillusioned and convinced they were one-hit wonders, the Zombies had split, leaving only a misunderstood psychedelic gem as a parting gift.

It's strange, then, to hear that *She's Not There* was something of an afterthought. In fact the band, all of whom were still teenagers, had to be cajoled into writing any original material of their own. At the end of 1963 they won a talent contest at Watford Town Hall. First prize was a recording contract with Decca, who, still smarting over passing on The Beatles, were determined not to miss out again.

"The idea was that we'd record the Gershwins' *Summertime* as our first single," keyboardist Argent recalls, "but a couple of weeks before we were due to go in our producer Ken Jones said: 'You should really try and write something for the session.' I had only ever written one song before."

Retreating to his room for inspiration, keyboardist Argent saw the name of the track *No One Told Me* on one of his John Lee Hooker albums. "I really liked the rhythm of that phrase. I started with a minor-to-major chord sequence. At least that's what I thought it was. I realised later that I'd actually played these chords in a modal sort of way, which gives the beginning of *She's Not There* its characteristic flavour."

"Then I had this idea of building up to a climax. I wanted it to be exciting and make use of Colin's vocal talents. So at the end of the song I had the poor guy singing at the top of his range. Which he cursed me for many times when we had to go on BBC radio at 10 o'clock in the morning."

She's Not There single picked up favourable reviews – including a thumbs-up from George Harrison on TV pop show *Juke Box Jury* – and the band watched as the record worked its way up the charts on both sides of the Atlantic. According to Argent, it was the very least they expected.

"I don't know if it was arrogance so much as inexperience," he says. "I thought well, you do one of these things, it's going to come out and be a hit and be a big hit in America. And it was!"

Their UK follow-up, *Leave Me Be*, flopped completely. "With the benefit of hindsight, we needed to wait," suggests Blunstone. "Rod had only just started writing, so we didn't have a back catalogue of songs to choose from. None of us felt very enthusiastic about *Leave Me Be*."

Around the world the Zombies' profile remained high. But this was an era when The Beatles had raised the bar to impossible heights for British groups. There was also the fact that in Britain, at least, they were regarded as one-hit wonders. "That coloured the way we thought about things," says Argent.

In 1967, having just come back from an arena tour of the Philippines, the decision was made to throw the towel in. The band's final album, *Odessey And Oracle*, limped out posthumously in the following year.

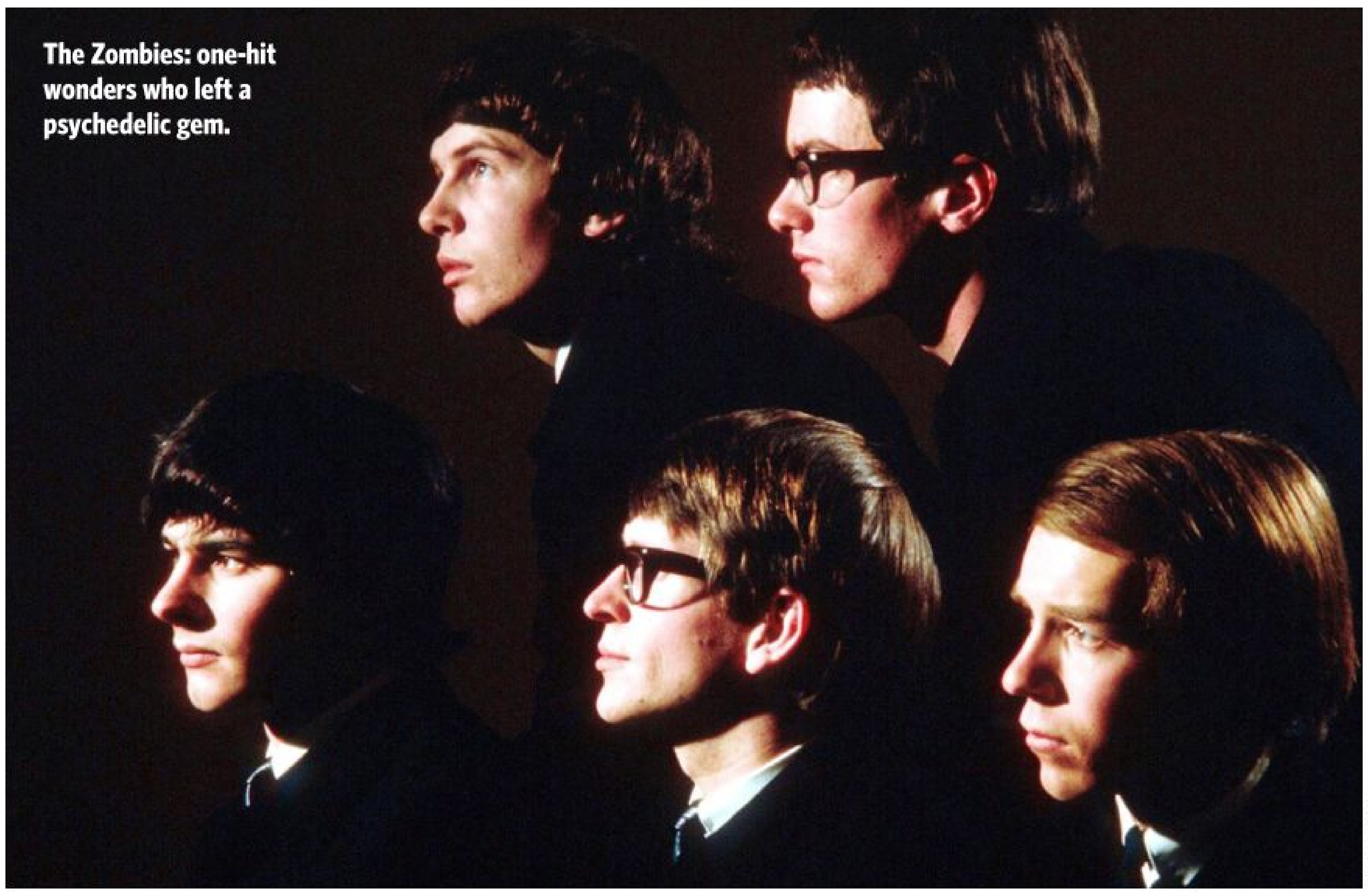
Argent formed his own eponymous outfit, while Blunstone kicked his heels for a time before embarking on a solo career.

While the Zombies went their separate ways, *She's Not There* never really went away. Covers by artists as varied as Santana and UK Subs cemented its reputation, and the original has been an influence on several generations of musicians; Roger McGuinn of the Byrds and Billy Joel have both described it as pivotal in their musical development. And it's hard to believe that another keyboard-led band, the Doors, weren't taking note of its air of cool detachment.

"Even after all these years I still don't think it sounds like anything else."

For the Zombies themselves there was a happy ending. Eventually. Over the years the ill-fated (and famously misspelt) *Odessey And Oracle* slowly worked its subtle magic, selling steadily, and became a byword for the archetypal lost psyche classic.

The upshot is that the re-formed group stepped on stage in 2008 to perform the album; a fitting testimonial for what many regard as the British *Pet Sounds*. Naturally, the set-list included the song that made it all possible. "It's such a unique song," says Blunstone. "Even after all these years I still don't think it sounds like anything else."



The Zombies: one-hit wonders who left a psychedelic gem.

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THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
July 1964

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
UK No.12,
US No.2

PERSONNEL
Colin Blunstone
Vocals
Rod Argent
Organ
Paul Atkinson
Guitar
Chris White
Bass
Hugh Grundy
Drums

PRODUCER
Ken Jones

WRITTEN BY
Rod Argent

LABEL
Decca

FACT
After the chief engineer got carried out of the *She's Not There* session, drunk, his assistant stepped up to the mixing desk. At which point opportunity knocked for Gus Dudgeon, who later went onto produce David Bowie, Elton John and the Beach Boys, among many others.

LEADER OF THE MAC

Among the many stars of London's mid-60s blues scene, one guy outshone and outplayed them all – Peter Green. Here, in interviews with John Mayall, Mike Vernon, former bandmates and the 'Man of the World' himself, we tell the story of how Fleetwood Mac were born.

Words: **Johnny Black**

Peter Green is, arguably, the most under-rated guitarist of the British mid-60s blues boom, consistently relegated to a position somewhere below the holy triumvirate of Clapton, Beck and Page. He deserves better. He would write some of the most memorable blues-based songs of the 60s, create some of the genre's most imaginative guitar licks and establish a band that, by the end of the decade, was out-selling The Beatles and The Stones.

Born in London's East End to a poor Jewish family, he had been turned onto the possibilities of guitar at the age of 11, in the skiffle era of the mid-50s. His brother Len acquired a cheap Spanish guitar and showed young Peter a few chords. Before long, it was Peter's guitar.

This is the story of how it all began for Peter Green, his first recordings and the creation of Fleetwood Mac.

August 11, 1965: John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, featuring Eric Clapton, play at Putney Pontiac Club in south-west London. Shortly after this gig, Clapton unexpectedly disappears to Greece for a two-week holiday.

John Mayall: I guess Eric just became bored with it. So he decided to get some friends together and go off to Greece. For me, it was panic stations because we'd come to rely on him so much and there were so few people to choose from as a replacement. I got a lot of replies to an ad I put in the *Melody Maker*, so I was auditioning different players every night, letting them sit in to see how they worked out. Then Peter came up to me during a gig at The Flamingo in Wardour Street and was fairly forceful, very insistent that he was better than the guy I had on stage that night, so I gave him a shot and he was quite right, of course.

Mike Vernon (Blue Horizon label founder and producer): Peter was an unknown quantity at this time. He had played in several local bands, the best known of which was perhaps The Muskrats, but he was not a big name.

Peter Green: John said I could play a little bit and he said, 'You've got the feeling', or something similar. Anyway, he let me on the train.

August 25, 1965: John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, featuring Eric Clapton, newly returned from Greece, play at Putney Pontiac Club.

John Mayall: Unfortunately, it was only a couple of weeks before Eric came back from Greece. Eric returned with a tan and Peter was out again. Peter wasn't very pleased about that, but that was the way it was.

Peter Green: I was only there for a week, and then I went with Peter B's Looners…

December 24, 1965: Georgie Fame And The Blue Flames, supported by instrumental band Peter B's Looners, led by organist Peter Bardens, play at The Flamingo. As well as Peter Green, the group also includes drummer Mick Fleetwood, both of whom will become founder members of Fleetwood Mac.

Mick Fleetwood: Peter came to audition… we were a very simple instrumental band, a lot of Booker T, Mose Allison. He had a great sound as they say, but me and the bassist, Dave Ambrose, didn't think he knew enough about the guitar. He only played a couple of licks, variations on a

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theme, Freddie King. And to Peter Bardens' credit, he pulled me aside and said, 'You're wrong, this guy's special.'

April 29, 1966: Peter B's Looners play at The Carousel Club, Farnborough, with an augmented line-up including vocalists Rod Stewart and Beryl Marsden. They have been brought in, at the behest of Flamingo owners Rik and John Gunnell, hoping not just to expand the band's musical range, but to create a white soul 'supergroup'.

Dave Ambrose: When Rod Stewart and Beryl Marsden came in as singers, the band changed to Shotgun Express, doing mainly soul and Tamla Motown songs.

May 6, 1966: Shotgun Express play at the Beachcomber club in Nottingham.

Beryl Marsden: The music hadn't happened organically. We had been rather manufactured. There was a lot of money out there to be earnt in the clubs we played, like The Flamingo in Soho, and The Ram Jam Club in Brixton, but we didn't see big wage packets at the end of the hard week's work, and that led to discontent, too.

Dave Ambrose (bass): We did a single on Columbia [*I Could Feel The Whole World Turn Round*] which was a minor hit but, shortly after a lot of soul searching on his part, Peter left.

June 17, 1966: With Eric Clapton having abandoned Mayall's Bluesbreakers again, Peter Green is drafted in to replace him once more.

John Mayall: With Peter back in the band, the way we played stayed pretty much the same. As long as you have the same rhythm section then things don't change that much – it's when you lose a bass player that you're in trouble.

Peter Green: I bumped into John Mayall on the road and he said, 'Eric Clapton's going to form Cream, with Ginger and Jack. Do you want to come with me and get some experience? And be a blues band again instead of trying to be Booker T & the M.G.'s?'

John Mayall: He was a little hesitant at first because he'd been offered a job with Eric Burdon which entailed going to America, which Peter had always wanted to do, but the music Burdon was playing wasn't as attractive to Peter as playing blues, so he opted to come back with me.

Beano there, done that: John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton.

July 22, 1966: John Mayall's Bluesbreakers release a new album, *Blues Breakers: John Mayall With Eric Clapton*, which had been recorded before Peter Green replaced Clapton.

John McVie: It was done at Decca studios in West Hampstead in less than a month. We played together a lot as a band, so we'd just go in and do takes live, with no overdubs. And as soon as the session was finished, we'd be out to gig. After the album came out a strange situation developed, because this upstart guy named Peter Green started playing with Mayall. There were guitar style wars going on between them – all that stuff about 'Clapton Is God' being sprayed on the walls was real!

July 24, 1966: John Mayall's Bluesbreakers play their first proper gig with Peter Green, at the Britannia Rowing Club, Nottingham.

Mick Fleetwood: He went immediately for the human touch, and that's what Peter's playing has represented to millions of people – he played with the human, not the superstar touch.

October 11, 1966: John Mayall's Bluesbreakers are in Decca studios with producer Mike Vernon recording *A Hard Road*. The sessions take five days in total, spread over a month.

Mike Vernon: All three Decca studios were custom-built by Decca boffins. The smallest, no.2, was used primarily for pop and group sessions, and had a really cool vibe… it was compact and vision between the control room and the main studio area was excellent. The sound achieved was never less than great but it did depend largely on the engineer. Working with engineer Gus Dudgeon made sense to me as he was very much into the music.

I am reasonably sure that I had not met Peter prior to his arrival at West Hampstead.

Me and Gus were looking at him and thinking, 'Who the hell is this? Where's Eric?' John Mayall just said, 'Oh, he's Eric's replacement.' I hadn't even heard that Eric had left The Bluesbreakers. John said Peter was as good as Eric, which was a bit hard to believe until he actually plugged in and then we thought, 'Ummm, he can play a bit!'

Initially, Peter seemed like a very quiet and somewhat reserved kind of guy… not outspoken or aggressive in any way.

He must have felt somewhat awkward, though, following in Clapton's footsteps. As the sessions progressed, Peter became a little more certain of his role as a Bluesbreaker… especially when he was given the chance to exercise his vocal chords. He certainly was not as reluctant to sing as his predecessor had been… he seemed to really enjoy that role and he was very good.

When I heard Peter sing *The Same Way* for the first time, I thought 'Wow!'. Here is a great blues singer, no inhibitions about singing with an English accent, expressive and individual. I had a feeling that Peter was destined to make his mark in the music business.

John Mayall: Peter was every bit as good in the studio as he was on the road. He just nailed it. I didn't need to give him any instructions. I chose him for his individuality, for the way he played, so why would I try to direct him? The only thing he actually wrote for the album was the instrumental, *The Supernatural*, but that was a great piece of music.

Peter Green: Mike Vernon came up with the idea for *The Supernatural*. He said he'd seen this guitarist who'd played a high note, sustained it and then let

John Mayall: big boss man of the British blues scene.

"ON A PERSONAL LEVEL PETER WAS A MUCH EASIER GUY TO WORK WITH THAN ERIC."
JOHN MAYALL

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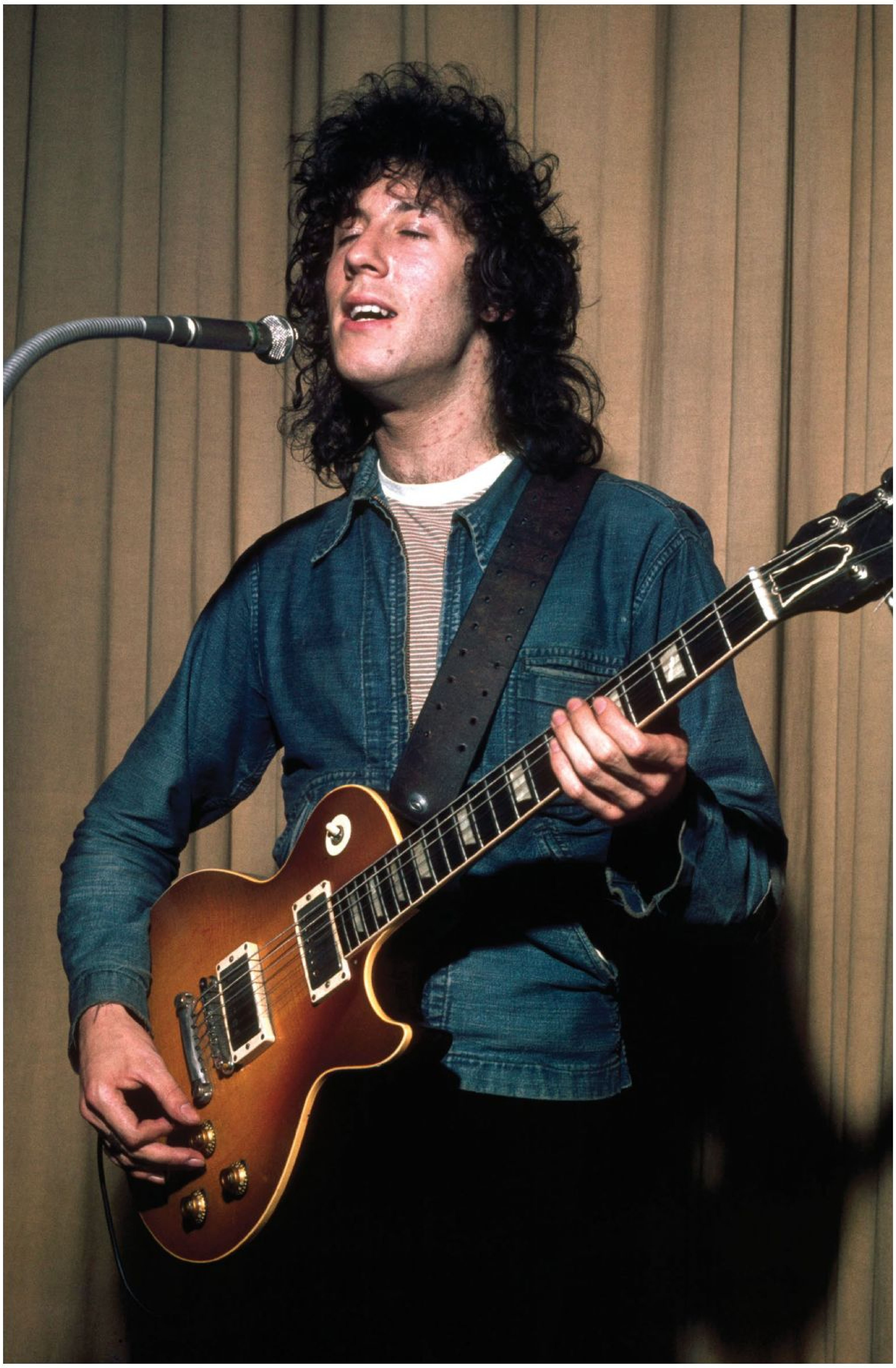
it roll all the way down the neck. But I played it and I decided on the sequence.
Mike Vernon: That was a major departure in sound and feel from anything we'd done with Eric. The fluidity of his playing was quite awe-inspiring. He seemed to have a natural ability to string together notes and phrases that worked straight away. There was little time spent on working out what he was going to play, either because he had already figured out what he was going to do in advance or the 'moment' took over and it just happened! In my estimation, Peter Green was just the very best blues guitarist this country has ever produced.

February 17, 1967: John Mayall And The Bluesbreakers release the album *A Hard Road*.
John Mayall: People often ask me about the differences between Peter and Eric, but I don't judge guitarists by the number of notes they play. I just want them to have something moving and original to say. On a personal level, though, Peter was a much easier guy to work with than Eric. Very easy-going and fun-loving, great to be around. He became a really good friend.

April 19, 1967: John Mayall And The Bluesbreakers record *Double Trouble* in London, but the song will not appear on the next album, *Crusade*, because of Green's departure from the band.
Mike Vernon: John really rated Peter's playing as well as his vocal prowess. Peter kept telling me he was fed-up with The Bluesbreakers and wanted to put his own unit together.
Mick Fleetwood: From the beginning he was a stickler about it not being all about him, but all about the band. That spirit was so important.
Mike Vernon: It just sort of snowballed, to the point where Peter was going to leave John Mayall and form his own band. He said to me, 'I want you to record our records and I want them out on your label, Blue Horizon. I don't mind if we're with Decca, but I don't want it on any other label but Blue Horizon.'
Neil Slaven (author and record producer): Mike and I were school friends. We'd formed a blues society at school, and in 1966 we had formed a label together called Blue Horizon, which was mail-order to start with. We did singles at first, and then albums. If you did 100 or fewer copies you didn't pay tax. The next thing was that we started the Blue Horizon Club in Battersea. Mike was already thinking about leaving Decca, and Peter had been doing slide acoustic gigs for us at the club. I remember him saying, 'For two pins I'd give all this up and start a pet shop.' There was always this other side to him that was detached, as if he was watching himself going into it.
Mick Fleetwood : We had no manager, so we did everything ourselves, and Peter did all the negotiations with Blue Horizon.
Jeremy Spencer (guitarist, Fleetwood Mac): In early spring of 1967, I was playing guitar in The Levi Set, in Lichfield, Staffordshire. Unbeknownst to me, my friend Phil had answered an ad in *Melody Maker*, which said that Mike Vernon was scouting Britain for blues talent. Mike came up to see us, and we did a 30-minute set and he was impressed and enthusiastic. He later arranged a session at Decca for us to record about four tracks. While there, Mike told me that Peter Green was quitting John Mayall's Bluesbreakers to form his own band and wanted to find another guitarist. Mike then arranged for us to play for half an hour between the sets of an upcoming John Mayall gig at Birmingham's Le Metro club, so Peter could see and hear me play.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June 11, 1967: John Mayall's Bluesbreakers play at Le Metro, Birmingham, supported by The Levi Set.
Jeremy Spencer: I walked up to Peter to introduce myself. He said 'Jeremy? Jeremy Spencer?' before I said anything. I said I was and asked him if he listened to Elmore James. He said, 'Yes, all the time. Do you listen to B. B. King?'
I said I did, and we chatted until it was time for their set. I had seen John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Peter Green some months previously and had enjoyed it. Anyway, the Levi Set played for about half an hour between Mayall's sets. I was happy that a good time had been had, but I pretty much discounted any idea of Peter wanting me in his new band. To my surprise, however, Peter asked if I wanted a drink, and as we stood by the bar, he talked as though I was already in it! He was saying stuff like, 'Well, you can do a couple of Elmore things and then I do a couple of B. B.'s and so on like that…'
I finally said, 'Are you serious? Do you like what I play?' He said I was the first guitarist that made him smile since Hendrix! Knowing that Peter disdained speed-freak guitar playing, I said, 'But he's fast. I'm not.'
He said, 'It's not the amount of notes

Ready to shake their moneymakers (l-r): Peter Green, John McVie, Jeremy Spencer and a very relaxed Mick Fleetwood.

you play. It's what goes into the notes.'

Then he showed me a page that he had written in his notebook on his way up to Birmingham. It was like a prayer that said something like, 'I can't go on with this music like it is. Please have Jeremy be good, please have him be good.'

Peter Green: I could see he was a little villain, you know? I thought I'd give it a try.

Neil Slaven: It was Jeremy and Mick who initiated all the madness in Fleetwood Mac. Peter seemed to enjoy it, but he didn't really join in. But Peter needed someone like Jeremy around to inject something extrovert into gigs that he knew he couldn't provide.

June 15, 1967: Peter Green quits John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

John Mayall : I was disappointed when Peter left, because he was really a special player, but his heart wasn't in it so much, because we were leaning more towards jazzier elements.

Mike Vernon: I don't think Peter found it that easy to be the 'boss' of Fleetwood Mac. There were a lot of issues at the onset. He couldn't get John McVie to leave Mayall and so Bob Brunning took the bass player spot. I do think that Mick also played an important part in holding the unit together. He had a keen sense of how things should be done and, in that area, he and Peter usually agreed.

Mick Fleetwood: Peter and I came from very different backgrounds. He was an East End lad with a chip on his shoulder - a Jewish boy who got beaten up. He got away from it, but it caught him up in the end when it all went wrong.

"PETER WAS STRAIGHTFORWARD, INTUITIVE AND A DEEP THINKER."
JEREMY SPENCER

August 14, 1967: Fleetwood Mac make their debut on the third day of the National Jazz and Blues Festival, Windsor. Cream, Donovan, Jeff Beck, PP Arnold, Alan Bown, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Chicken Shack, Blossom Toes, Pentangle and Denny Laine are on the same bill.

John McVie: I wasn't the bass player with Fleetwood Mac that night; I was playing with John Mayall, who was headlining. Peter Green was harassing me to join the band, and I said, 'No, I'm fine playing with John'.

Stan Webb (guitarist, Chicken Shack): Peter and me were talking about the price of beer. Peter was wearing a white T-shirt and blue jeans, and Eric Clapton came over to us wearing a bed spread, rings on every finger, his frizzy hair sticking out six inches, and said to Peter, 'You'll never be a star if you dress like that.' Peter just smiled. And that sums it up.

Jeremy Spencer: Peter was straightforward, intuitive and a deep thinker. I think I brought to the band a kind of happy-go-lucky bawdiness, I suppose, but we related on musical and even what could be termed mystical wavelengths. We still do, in a similar way, during our infrequent interactions on the telephone.

August 28, 1967: John Mayall's Bluesbreakers play at The Marquee, London. This will prove to be John McVie's last gig with the band.

John McVie: At the time John had horn players in the band, and we were rehearsing at some club when John turned to one of them and said, 'Okay - just play it free-form there.' I said, with typical blues snobbishness, "I thought this was a blues band, not a jazz band!" I immediately went across the street, called Peter, and asked if he still wanted me to join up. I joined Fleetwood Mac in September '67.

September 9, 1967: In a secret session at Decca studios in New Bond Street, London, Fleetwood Mac record three tracks – *I Believe My Time Ain't Long*, *Rambling Pony* and *Long Grey Mare*.

Mick Fleetwood: Mike used his key to the studio to record us after hours.

Mike Vernon: We recorded it extremely late at night, in the big studio at Decca. We shouldn't have been there, when nobody at Decca knew we were doing it.

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TALKIN' TRASH

'Dog And Dustbin': the debut album that kick-started a blues boom…

Words: **Charles Shaar Murray**

Most albums are referenced by their titles, or an abbreviation thereof. Others attract nicknames. The Beatles' 1968 double album, officially entitled simply *The Beatles* is generally known, for obvious reasons, as the White Album; John Mayall's *Bluesbreakers With Eric Clapton* as Beano for the kids' comic EC is perusing on the cover…

Fleetwood Mac's debut, simply called *Fleetwood Mac*, will be forever known as Dog And Dustbin.The cover depicts a dingy alleyway, with the iconic mutt nosing around the equally iconic trash can. The graffito-style whitewash of the band's name, on the grimy brickwork wall, was rather obviously added at the artwork stage after the photo was taken. No psychedelic rococo Art Deco blobbage, no revolutionary posturing, no group shot with pretty clothes and lovely hair here, mate; this was defiantly presented as Gritty Urban Realism. This was the blues.

Peter Green had been catapulted to the forefront of Britain's blues-rock guitar ranks as the rabbit John Mayall had pulled out of his hat – or, if you prefer, the ace card from up Mayall's sleeve – after Eric 'God' Clapton had gone walkies from Mayall's Bluesbreakers in 1966 to go all paisley and acid with Cream. Green had won his spurs by replacing the allegedly irreplaceable. Now it was his turn to quit Mayall's stern employ and form a group of his own.

Mike Vernon, Mayall's producer for Decca, had also struck out on his own to form the Blue Horizon label, and Green's new band would be his flagship act. Green may have seemed like a cocky Bethnal Green 'erbert, but he was also remarkably self-effacing: he named his group after the rhythm section (drummer Mick Fleetwood and bassist John McVie – even before he joined), and shared the front line with young singer/guitarist Jeremy Spencer, whose belting Elmore James pastiches and clownish 50s rock routines provided a massive contrast to Green's austerely soulful performances.

"Our first session in CBS's Bond Street studio wasn't a big production," says Mick Fleetwood. "We went in, set up and played our live set." Cut over three days in November 1967 and released in February 1968, the first album by the group briefly (if unwieldily) known as Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac with Jeremy Spencer was an unexpected smash: it spent over four months in the UK Top 10, peaking at No.4, and was acclaimed by *Melody Maker* as "the best English blues LP ever released here".

Was it? Well, it was certainly a startling revelation of Peter Green's vocal and instrumental prowess, both on taut, riff-driven pieces like *Long Grey Mare* and *Looking For Somebody* and racked, monumental slow-blues epics like *Merry-Go-Round* and *I Loved Another Woman*. All Green's stuff on the album was performed bare-bones, backed only by the Mick 'n' Mac rhythm section and garnished only with the odd harmonica overdub. Spencer never played behind Green, though on the roaring, rocking Elmore James evocations which represented most of his contributions, Green supplied exemplary rhythm guitar. They really were two different groups, depending on who was up front. The difference was that – charming and infectious as Spencer's showcases were, and an arresting contrast to Green's needlepoint dourness – when you listen to Jeremy Spencer, sooner or later you always end up wishing you were listening to the real Elmore James; when you hear Peter Green, despite the frequent allusions to both B.B. King and Hank Marvin, you're only hearing Peter Green.

Hit singles follow not too long after, but Fleetwood Mac had demonstrated that a band could have a hugely successful album before ever troubling the pop singles chart. That success kick-started a 'blues boom' of sorts, of which fellow Blue Horizon act Chicken Shack were the chief beneficiaries. However, one wonders how musical history would have been altered had Peter Green billed himself as a solo artist or named his band after himself (as many would have preferred him to do) and not shared the spotlight so generously. Instead, he left Mick 'n' Mac with a name which would long outlast his tenure, and enable them to survive his own precipitous departure and ultimately achieve even greater success as an almost unrecognisably different band.

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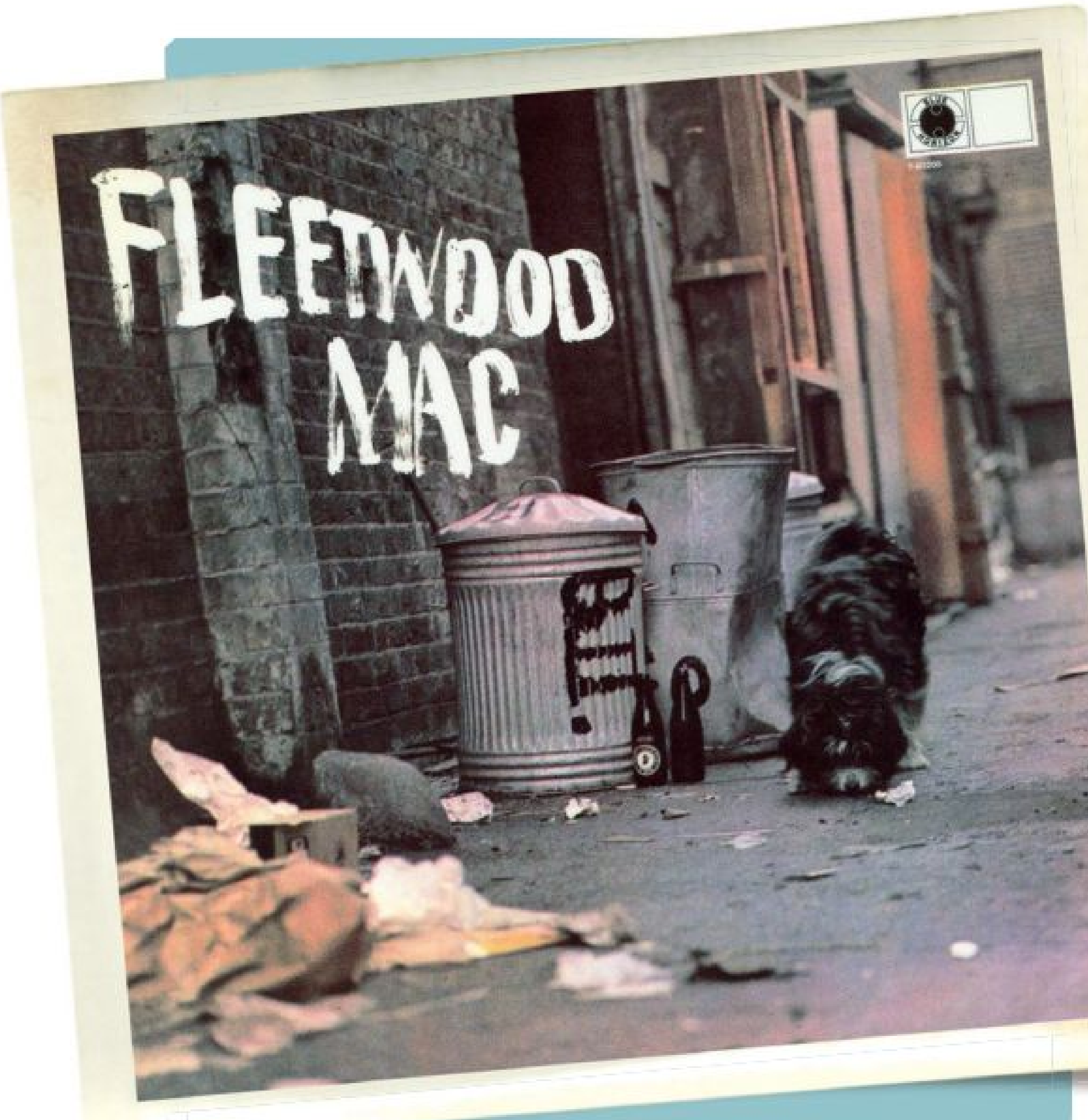

COVER NOTES

The celebrated Dog and Dustbin cover

Anyone who didn't notice the self-effacing humour of Fleetwood Mac in 1968, didn't look closely enough at the cover of the album. Not for them some grainily 'authentic' pic of the fivesome looking grizzled and undernourished, clutching their axes like weapons of war. Instead it portrays a border collie sniffing around a dustbin in a dingy back alley.

So? Well, the third track on the album is *Hellhound On My Trail*. How much more clearly could they say it? This was a band owning up - 'We're white boys from London playing the blues.'

Little wonder, then, that the photograph eventually bestowed the album with its nickname 'Dog and Dustbin'.

As Mike Vernon recalls, "It was taken by Terence Ibbott, somewhere in Camden Town, I think. The dog's name was Scruff and it belonged to my first wife, Judith."

Keen-eyed cover art aficionados may also have noticed Ibbott's name as photographer and sometimes designer on albums by Chicken Shack, Savoy Brown, Sunnyland Slim and others.

An indicator of the lack of sophistication available to album cover designers in them days is the name of the band which, at first glance, appears to have been grafitti'd onto the wall behind the dustbins with cheap white paint. Look closer and it's actually been added in the art department studio, with just a bare-minimum of effort put into making it appear to bend round the outcrops in the misshapen wall. Any 10-year-old with access to Paint Shop Pro could do a better job today. Back then, of course, none of us looked that closely and, in the end, it was the stuff inside the cover that mattered.

September 19, 1967: Fleetwood Mac plays at Klook's Kleek, West Hampstead, London, UK.
Mike Vernon : I spent many hours following them around the club and university circuits. Seeing them working in front of an audience and gauging the latter's reaction to new and old material helped in deciding what to record. In summary, I would say that Peter had to work at being the 'boss'...once he was at ease with that situation, everything moved forward at a faster pace and with better results.
Mick Fleetwood : Peter would come over and whip me! 'It ain't fuckin' swingin'! You ain't puttin' it where it should be!' He would treat me like a dog, but that's all it took. 'I know you can do it, just do it.' 'Just feel it, buddy!' Everything I am musically I owe to Peter. I am more capable technically than I appear, but that's a lesson well learnt from this man: less is more, more is less.

November 3, 1967: The first UK single by Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac, I Believe My Time Ain't Long, is released.
Mike Vernon: The very first demos had been offered to Decca, and they weren't rejected, but they wouldn't put the record out on the Blue Horizon label so we offered it to CBS, who took it and took the label identity as well. But once that record came out and was something of a success, I got the dreaded phone call from the seventh floor at Decca, got called in and was told, 'You can't produce records for other record companies!' I said, 'Well, I did offer it to you and you rejected it, so I took it to someone else'. And they said, 'OK, fair enough, but you can't do these two things at once, so you either have to resign or we'll fire you!' So I said, 'Right, I resign as of now,' went away, and about three weeks later I came back and signed an independent production deal with Decca....
Mick Fleetwood : Peter saved my bacon on more than one occasion. One night at The Marquee, we'd had a few drinks, we were jamming, and I'd got over-adventurous and came out of it the wrong way. I'd lost track of whether I was on the off-beat or the on-beat, but Peter always knew, so he was laughing at me. I was completely lost, but I kept going of course, until Peter came back, grabbed my wrist and put me back in time. He was my mentor, my partner, and my friend. That was my training ground. I didn't really have a lot of confidence. I was going around with Aynsley Dunbar, the drummer of John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, who was an incredible drummer, and still is. I had sort of a humorous self-effacing element to me, and Peter was a great encourager of it. He told me that it was one of the best things about my playing.

November 22, 1967: Fleetwood Mac are in CBS Studios, New Bond Street, London, recording *Merry Go Round, Hellhound On My Trail, I Loved Another Woman, Cold Black Night, The World Keeps On Turning, Watch Out, A Fool No More, You're So Evil* and *Mean Old Fireman*. Most of these tracks will appear on their debut album.
Mike Vernon: I don't think Peter was very interested, at that time, in the recording process.

> "EVERYTHING I AM MUSICALLY I OWE TO PETER."
> MICK FLEETWOOD

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That was my job, along with the engineer. He fully understood the basics though. I think he felt that his job was to create the music and the atmosphere that was essential to get the best results. If I had any qualms it would only have been that they could sometimes be infuriating with their persistent 'messing around'.

Mike Ross (engineer): The first time I met Peter was when they walked into our studio, which was on the first floor above a fashion shop. It wasn't a great studio, but we made it work. It had been a ballroom in the early 1900s, so it had very high ceilings which we'd had lowered, otherwise drum sounds would just bounce around everywhere.

As a staff engineer for CBS, I was doing pop bands like The Marmalade and The Tremeloes, so this was my first real exposure to blues.

Peter was obviously the boss, he was very verbal. The two people I remember doing most of the talking were Mick Fleetwood and Peter Green. They were the guys in charge. The others were more quiet, a bit laid back. Mick and Peter used to give me lifts home after sessions because I lived at Holland Park and they were in Shepherd's Bush, and that's how I started to realise what good friends they were. They were very close.

Those sessions were mainly recorded live, with the band DI'd straight into the mixing desk. We were using a four-track recorder, but they wouldn't let us record them separately, which I would have preferred, to achieve a better sound. Peter didn't want a 'better' sound. He wanted it to sound as near as possible to the way they sounded on stage. So they would all play at once, with Peter singing and playing simultaneously. As a result, there was quite a lot of spill across the tracks, which I think did add to the roomy sound. It was absolutely live, but it wasn't dirty enough for them. There were lots of conversations about how Chess Records sounded. They even brought in a couple of Chess 78s to illustrate the sound they wanted.

In fact, when they heard the tapes they were really not happy with them, but there wasn't much we could do about that except maybe re-mix them a little by changing the levels on the tracks. They wanted it to sound rougher, but Mike Vernon was able to talk them out of that, so we didn't really get close to what they wanted until the second album, *Mr Wonderful*, where we got them to bring their stage amps and speakers into the studio and play through them.

Danny Kirwan (second from right) joined the Mac in August 1968.

December 5, 1967: John Mayall is in recording studios in London working on the tracks *Jenny* and *Picture On The Wall*, with Peter Green on guitar.

John Mayall: Even after Peter left, we remained great friends, so I would go out to see him playing live in Fleetwood Mac, which was a very exciting band – mostly my old band – but you can't stand in the way of progress.

December 11, 1967: Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac is in CBS studios recording *My Heart Beat Like A Hammer*, *Shake Your Money Maker* and *Leaving Town Blues*. The first two of these tracks will appear on the band's debut album, *Fleetwood Mac*.

Mike Ross: I was impressed by the quality of their songs, and also by the speed at which they worked. Most of the songs would be just two takes, or even one in some cases.

They took it all quite seriously, no messing around once they got down to work. Mike Vernon was quite a strict producer. I think they knew better than to mess around with him being there.

The only one who was a bit of a humorous character was Jeremy Spencer. He just wanted to be Elvis Presley and he'd come out with a bit of *Heartbreak Hotel* or something in the middle of a session. He wanted tape echo on everything. He was a rock'n'roller at heart, more so than a blues man, but his Elmore James' guitar style was amazing.

Jeremy Spencer: Peter had asked me on the band's onset if I ever wrote my own material and I had told him that I didn't. The problem was that I was uninspired with getting anything new. No wonder he eventually welcomed Danny Kirwan's creative addition.

February 16, 1968: Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac release their debut album, *Fleetwood Mac*, on Blue Horizon. It will peak at No4 and remain on the UK chart for 37 weeks.

Mike Vernon: Peter was able to really put good melodies together within his playing, probably more so than Clapton who had a much more rhythmical approach, he never got out of the groove. Whereas Eric had energy in his playing, Peter had a deftness, a touch and a more melodic style, and actually at that time he probably had a deeper blues than Eric.

Melody Maker (review): The is the best English blues LP ever released.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...

Seeking to expand the band's musical horizons, Green drafted in a third guitarist, Danny Kirwan, and the major hit singles started in 1969 with *Albatross*, *Man Of The World* and *Oh Well*. Green's well-documented and disastrous encounters with LSD resulted in the demise of the first incarnation of Fleetwood Mac, but the remnants relocated to the US where, eventually, with a change of line-up and musical direction, they were reincarnated as one of the most successful rock bands of all time.

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The original supergroup, **Cream** lasted just over two years. *Classic Rock* looks back on the forgotten legends that were one of the most influential bands rock has ever seen.

CREAM OF THE CROP

WORDS: HUGH FIELDER

GOLD TOP - THE BEGINNINGS OF CREAM

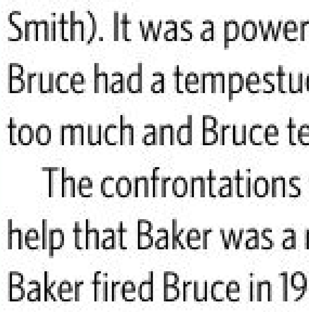
GINGER BAKER Born 1939 in Lewisham, south London. Started playing drums with various London trad jazz bands in the late 50s, including the Terry Lightfoot Band in 1958, but he soon quit after a heated altercation with the purist Lightfoot over the inclusion of 'modern' beats.

Baker spent the next two years with various jazz and dance bands before landing a gig in the house band at the Flamingo Club, backing visiting American jazz musicians and soul singers. In 1962 he replaced Charlie Watts in Blues Inc which included guitarist Alexis Korner, organist Graham Bond, sax player Dick Heckstall-Smith… and bassist Jack Bruce.

JACK BRUCE Born 1943 in Bishopbriggs, Lanarkshire, Scotland. Played cello as a child before enrolling at the Royal Scottish College Of Music at the tender age of 16. He left after one year, citing 'musical differences', and played with a number of jazz bands before joining the Jim McHarg Scottsville Jazz Band in 1962. At a Cambridge University gig that summer he sat in with an ad-hoc band fronted by Dick Heckstall-Smith with Ginger Baker on drums. A few weeks later he was recruited into Blues Inc, followed soon afterwards by Baker.

The following year Bond, Baker and Bruce set up the Graham Bond Organisation with guitarist John McLaughlin (later replaced by Heckstall-Smith). It was a powerful if unpredictable jazz-oriented band. Baker and Bruce had a tempestuous relationship, Baker telling Bruce that he played too much and Bruce telling Baker that he played too loud.

The confrontations were frequently physical, often on stage. It didn't help that Baker was a registered heroin addict (along with Bond). When Baker fired Bruce in 1965, Jack refused to accept it – until Baker produced a knife. Bruce sought sanctuary as a temporary bassist in John Mayall's Bluebreakers… Which is where he met Eric Clapton.



ERIC CLAPTON Born 1945, Ripley, Surrey. Became besotted with the blues as a teenager, and in 1963 joined The Yardbirds who were taking over from The Rolling Stones on the London club circuit. He left in the spring of 1965 after The Yardbirds 'sold out' by recording *For Your Love*.

Within a month he had joined John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, where he soaked up Mayall's voluminous blues collection. After a break for a busking holiday in Greece, Clapton returned to find Bruce playing bass in the Bluesbreakers. Even though they were together for only three gigs they made a big impression on each other.

Clapton recorded Mayall's now-legendary *Bluesbreakers With Eric Clapton* album in April 1966. But before it was released Baker approached Clapton about forming a band together. Unaware of Baker and Bruce's previous history, Clapton was insistent that Bruce should join them. Baker and Bruce warily agreed a truce. Cream was born.

The world's first 'supergroup', Cream existed for barely two years in the late 60s, and in their lifetime recorded just two full studio albums. You won't find them featured in any of those chart lists or ubiquitous cheapo-TV *The Top 100 Somethingorother* shows. Ask most people under 30 about the music of Cream and they'll think you're talking about the Liverpool/Ibiza dance club.

Within a couple of days of news leaking out in January this year that Cream were playing London's Royal Albert Hall in May, all the tickets had gone. At £50-£125 they weren't cheap to start with, but within a month a web search would find you a seat in the front stalls selling for £1,700, and a restricted-view from the balcony at around £350. A box? Don't ask.

So what is it about Cream that makes middle-aged men prepared to cash in their life assurance policies to see them play, close to 40 years after the trio played their last shows?

The simple answer is that Cream pioneered a fusion of rock, blues and jazz that directly influenced an entire generation of musicians and therefore the course of rock music over the next decade. And the legacy continues to filter down. Dave Navarro of Jane's Addiction is just one contemporary guitarist proud to cite Cream as a major influence.

Before drummer Ginger Baker, bassist Jack Bruce and guitarist Eric Clapton formed Cream in 1966, most British pop music stuck pretty rigidly to a verse/chorus format, and any instrumental solo was generally confined to repeating the melody.

Cream changed all that. For example, they took the two-note riff that comprised Willie Dixon's *Spoonful* and stretched it from two-and-a-half minutes to six-and-a-half, exaggerated it, and improvised all around it with a dazzling display of virtuoso playing. This wasn't a new idea, but it was largely confined to jazz – a style that by the mid-60s, as Frank Zappa famously remarked, "wasn't dead, it just smelled funny".

The dynamic that propelled Cream hinged on Baker and Bruce's jazz backgrounds and Clapton's blues roots. Clapton may not have had the musical knowledge and technique that Baker and Bruce possessed, but he had a God-given gift that enabled the group to justify their audacious name.

"I was full of very big ideas about what I felt we could do," Jack Bruce explains. "It was sort of rewriting the blues, if you like. It sounds kind of presumptuous to say it. I felt there was the possibility of a new kind of language with this band."

On stage the chemistry within Cream was staggering. "It was if something else had taken over," Baker explains. "You're not conscious of playing. You're listening to this fantastic sound that you're a part of. And your part is just… happening. It was a gift, and we three had it in abundance." Clapton was more succinct. He called it "blues, ancient and modern".

More significantly, Cream proved that there was an audience for their music. Their first album, *Fresh Cream*, released at the end of 1966, went Top 10 in the UK and spent four months in the chart.

The next batch of R&B musicians forming bands in the wake of The Rolling Stones, The Animals, The Who, the Spencer Davis Group, Them and the rest now had a new direction to follow. And just as they were absorbing the possibilities, in the spring of 1967, along came the Jimi Hendrix Experience with their debut album *Are You Experienced?*. What had been a wind of change became a gale.

Within a year, fuel-injected blues bands such as Ten Years After, Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac, the Jeff Beck Group and Chicken Shack would be reaping the benefit. Further afield, the likes of Traffic, Jethro Tull, The Nice and King Crimson were all noting the implications and plotting a course.

It was the same in America when Cream started touring there in autumn 1967. West Coast audiences had already been primed by the spaced-out jams of psychedelic musical crusaders like The Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin and Quicksilver Messenger Service, but Cream simply blew all-comers off stage – they really were that good.

Not surprisingly, Cream focused their attention on the States. They recorded their second album at Atlantic Records' New York studios. But label boss Ahmet Ertegun, who thought he was getting a British blues band to rival US bands Big Brother & The Holding Company or the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, was aghast at Cream's new material. He was particularly contemptuous of a song called *Sunshine Of Your Love*.

"I remember playing it to Ahmet and he

DEZO HOFFMANN / REX FEATURES

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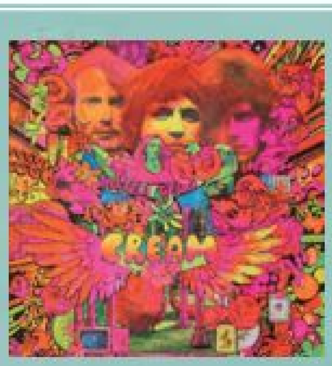
Cream go psychedelic (not to mention stratospheric): (l to r) Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker in 1967.

THE CROP – CREAM'S RECORDED LEGACY

FRESH CREAM 1966

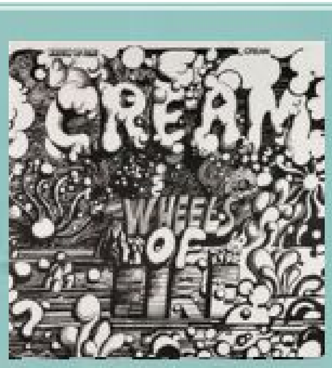
Cream's raw, dynamic debut, characterised by Bruce's jazz-influenced bass, Baker's thunderous rhythms and Clapton's searing solos. The group's deconstructed versions of *Spoonful, I'm So Glad and Rollin' And Tumblin'* have awesome power, while the prototype heavy rock riffs of their self-written *NSU* and *Sweet Wine* add another dimension. Now includes their first two singles: *Wrapping Paper* and *I Feel Free*.

DISRAELI GEARS 1967



Epitomising the spirit of 1967 from the sleeve to the grooves, Cream blaze their way though a range of material, from the swirling, atmospheric *Strange Brew, Dance The Night Away* and *We're Going Wrong* to the fierce riffs of *SWLABR* and the grinding wah-wah of *Tales Of Brave Ulysses*. Capping it all is the future metal classic *Sunshine Of Your Love*. Deluxe Edition includes BBC sessions and alternative takes.

WHEELS OF FIRE 1968

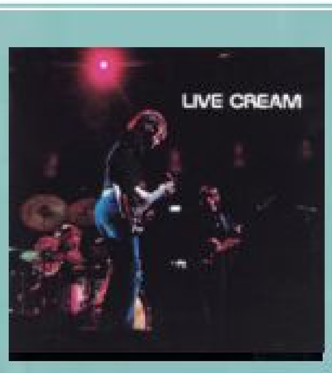


In the studio: the anthemic *White Room*, the biting funk of *Politician* and *Born Under A Bad Sign*, the blues power of *Sitting On Top Of The World* and the high-flying *Those Were The Days*. Live at The Fillmore: 17-minute versions of *Spoonful* and Baker's drum solo *Toad*, plus the concise, blistering *Crossroads* that crams Cream's essence into an astonishing 4min 14sec. Released as double, and a single studio album.

GOODBYE 1969

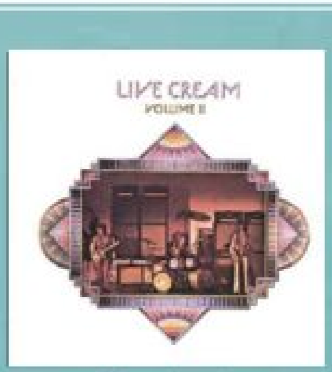
The goody bag at the end of the party, condensing studio tracks and live material from the farewell tour onto one album, and highlighting the schizophrenia at the heart of Cream. They each have a studio track, and Clapton brings in George Harrison to supply the bridge for *Badge*, which became a hit single. The live *I'm So Glad* is nascent grunge. The album gave Cream a posthumous UK No.1.

LIVE CREAM VOL I 1970



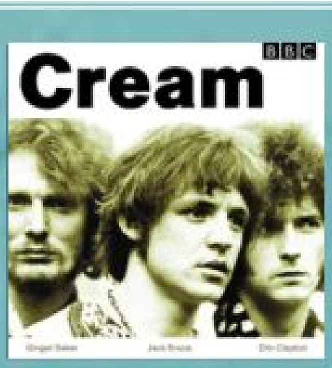
Four songs from their *Fresh Cream* debut album (which formed the bulk of their live set throughout their career), with *NSU* weighing in at a monstrous 10 minutes and *Sweet Wine* a turgid 15 minutes. Meanwhile, *Sleepy Time Time* and *Rollin' And Tumblin'* are modestly kept to under seven minutes. There's also a studio version of *Hey Lawdy Mama* – the song that got psyched into *Strange Brew* on *Disraeli Gears*.

LIVE CREAM VOL II 1972



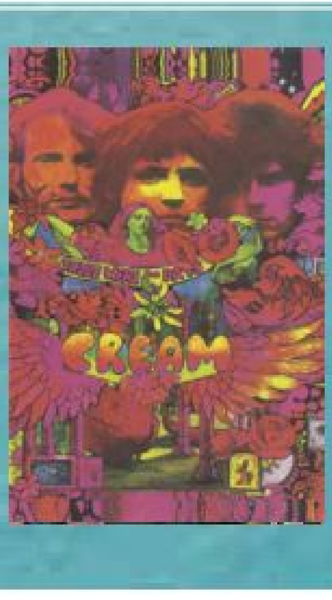
A last trawl through the 1968 live tapes box (sadly there are no official Cream recordings from 1967) that comes up with uninspired versions of *Wheels Of Fire* tracks including *White Room* and *Deserted Cities Of The Heart*. It's rescued by a heavy-metal *Sunshine Of Your Love* and the howling, 13-minute instrumental *Steppin' Out* that Martin Scorsese used for the memorable climax of his 1973 movie *Mean Streets*.

BBC SESSIONS 2003



Twenty-two tracks laid down between late 1966 and early 1968, and catching Cream on the spot during their most creative period. Only two tracks clock in at more than four minutes, and some are even shorter than the studio album versions, but it's amazing how inventive the three musicians can be within such confines. More illuminating than either volume of *Live Cream* – and far less likely to cure your insomnia.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS 1997



A four-CD set, with every track from their six albums along with non-album singles, rejected tracks for the first album, intriguing out-takes from the second, a couple of unreleased songs resurrected for Bruce's solo debut, *Sunshine Of Your Love* recorded for the Glen Campbell TV show, and a Falstaff beer commercial. Perfect with the BBC sessions.

Cream: the original supergroup.

GETTY X3

called it 'psychedelic hogwash'," Bruce laughs. "Fortunately there were other people coming in and out of the studio where Cream were recording, like Booker T Jones and Otis Redding, and they listened and said: 'This is good. This is happening'. They saw that riff as something that was musically interesting and commercial as well."

Sunshine Of Your Love was Cream's breakthrough in the US. It was their biggest single there, reaching No.5, and remains their best-known song.

Ertegun, wisely realising that he was out of his depth when it came to the commercial potential of 'psychedelic hogwash', brought in another weirdo who'd been hanging around the studio, Felix Pappalardi, to help shape the band's sound with producer Tom Dowd.

Pappalardi – who would later hook up with Leslie West and Corky Laing to form Mountain (best described as a Cream tribute band) – took one of the few bona fide blues numbers Cream had recorded, *Hey Lawdy Mama*, and twisted it into the surreal *Strange Brew*. Pappalardi also got Clapton to pile on the overdubs like they were going out of fashion (actually they were just coming in) and play around with newly invented gizmos like the wah-wah pedal.

But Cream were not really paying much attention to Britain. They were embarking on series of record-breaking tours of America. They demonstrated that cracking the US is a long, arduous task, but that if you stick at it the rewards are immense.

America proved to be Cream's downfall, too. The relentless touring there poured petrol on the sparking, volatile relationship between Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce.

Relentless touring of America didn't do much for the band's playing, either. The intensity of their live shows proved impossible to maintain, with or without artificial stimulants. Minus inspiration, the jams became tedious. What made it worse was that the audience didn't know the difference, and often didn't care. Cream could stand on stage and tune up and audiences would go bonkers; what they actually played seemed irrelevant. One night Cream took to the stage amid a howl of accidental feedback, and received an immediate standing ovation. On another night they effectively played an instrumental set when the vocal mics failed, and still received rapturous applause, and got the same slavish response at another show when Clapton's guitar sound went down and the audience heard the set played by just bass and drums.

Tracks for Cream's third album, *Wheels Of Fire*, were recorded in brief gaps between tours and, despite Pappalardi's best efforts, struggled to repeat the spontaneous fluency of *Disraeli Gears*. What boosted *Wheels Of Fire* was a second, live disc comprised of four tracks displaying Cream's individual and collective virtuosity, warts and all.

> "I THINK WE WERE ONE OF THE EARLY HEAVY METAL BANDS WITHOUT KNOWING IT. AFTER WE DISBANDED, LED ZEPPELIN FILLED THE VOID." – ERIC CLAPTON

The double album was confirmation that Cream were two distinct bands in the studio and in concert. It was also confirmation that Cream were now superstars in America. *Wheels Of Fire* spent five weeks at No.1, and became the first double album ever to go platinum in the US.

But even before it was released the band had announced that they were splitting up. "We were touring in Texas when Eric came up and said: 'I've had enough'," according to Baker. "I said: 'Yeah, man, me too'." But they weren't allowed to leave America before a lucrative farewell tour there and the *Goodbye* album, plus material for a couple of posthumous live albums that enabled the record company to keep milking Cream.

Cream were an enormous live draw during the 60s.

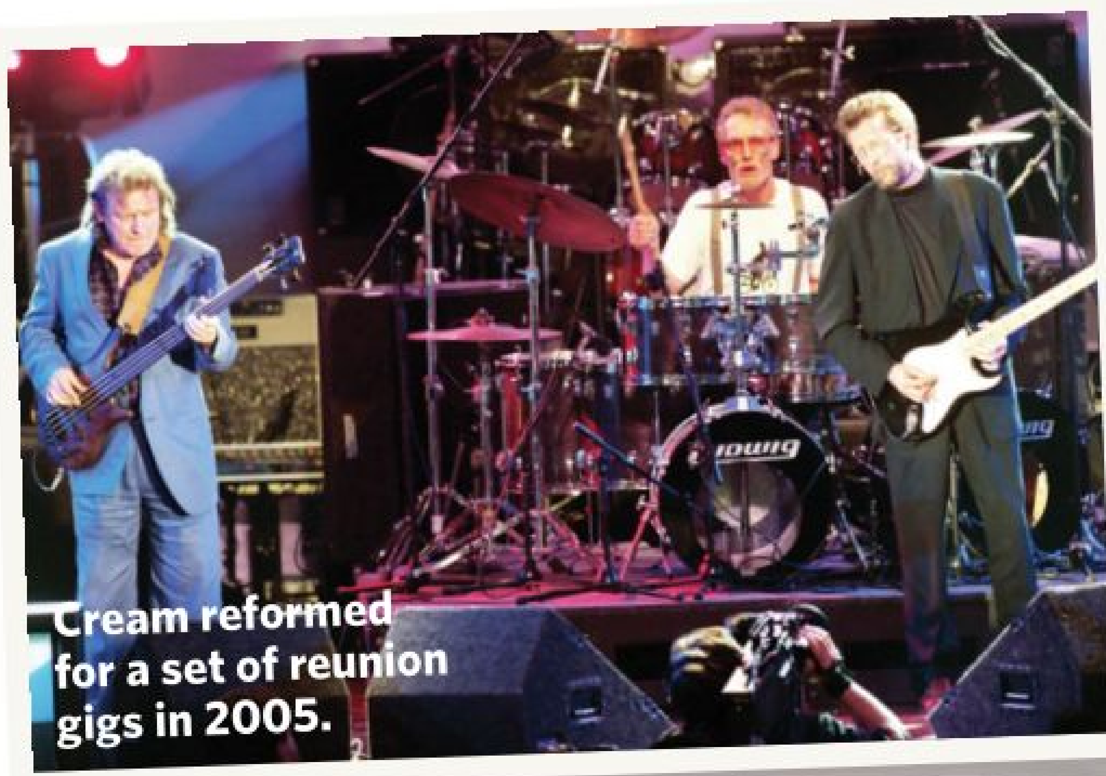
Bruce dived into a solo career, starting with the excellent *Songs For A Tailor*. Clapton linked up with Steve Winwood from Traffic to form another supergroup, Blind Faith, only to find Baker sitting on the drum stool when he got there. Despite the group's best intentions, Blind Faith were hyped beyond expectations. Almost inevitably, they imploded after debuting with a free concert in Hyde Park and just one album and tour.

So, given their achievements, why are Cream not as revered and put at the same pinnacle of rock history as, say, Jimi Hendrix – who they outsold many times over in the 60s? One of the reasons is, well… Hendrix.

Hendrix arrived in Britain just as Cream were launching their first album. In fact one of his first appearances was joining the band on stage at the Central London Polytechnic. But good though the Jimi Hendrix Experience were, they did not have the collective brilliance of Cream.

However, Hendrix had a panache and a sense of showmanship that Cream did not possess. Clapton did not squat on his haunches and thrust his guitar at the audience, flick his tongue suggestively at young ladies, or play guitar solos with his teeth. On stage Cream were largely static in front of vast banks of Marshall speakers, focused on their music.

Hendrix also scored several hit singles that ensured a media profile. Cream had a couple of Top 20 singles. They sold shedloads of albums, which of course was far more lucrative, but it meant their TV appearances tended to be on late-night BBC2 shows. And after the summer of 1967 they concentrated on America, playing only a handful of British shows before their London Royal Albert Hall farewell concert.



Cream reformed for a set of reunion gigs in 2005.

Cream also did not play any of the legendary festivals (their management turned down Monterey without even telling them); they concentrated on headlining their own shows. Which again made financial sense, but limited the band's profile. And apart from their farewell concert there's virtually nothing of Cream on celluloid apart from a specially filmed show in an empty Speakeasy Club that resurfaces from time to time. There's no shortage of Hendrix DVDs, however.

At the time, of course, Cream did not need to worry about their profile. Their gigs were standing-room-only pretty much from start to finish. And in America their albums sold in huge quantities. Four decades later, those albums and the *Farewell Concert* DVD comprise the Cream legacy. *The BBC Sessions* CD a couple of years ago is the only unreleased Cream material to have emerged since, apart from a handful of out-takes on the *Those Were The Days* box set.

Cream's biggest legacy, however, is one they were unaware of at the time. "I think we were one of the early heavy metal bands without knowing it," Eric Clapton has said. "After we disbanded, Led Zeppelin filled the void."

He is not wrong. Jimmy Page and manager Peter Grant followed Cream's progress in America very carefully, learning many lessons that they would then improve upon. Baker was an acknowledged influence on John Bonham; like Bruce, John Paul Jones had a broad musical talent; and you can argue about whether Clapton or Page is the greatest British guitarist until the drum solo finally ends.

Led Zeppelin recorded their first album just one month before Cream played their farewell gig at London's Royal Albert Hall in November 1968.

Jimmy Page has stated that he intended Zeppelin to be "a marriage of blues, hard rock and acoustic music topped with heavy choruses." Enough said.

HOW GOOD WERE THEY?

"THEY WERE INCREDIBLE. I NEVER SAW ANYTHING SO POWERFUL IN MY LIFE."
Tom Dowd (producer/Cream engineer)

"THE FIRST TIME I HEARD THEM WAS ON THE RADIO – *SUNSHINE OF YOUR LOVE*. BEING A DRUMMER, I WAS LISTENING TO HOW UNIQUE THE DRUMMING WAS. IT BLEW ME AWAY."
Alex Van Halen

"WHAT A GROUP. I KNEW I HAD A LOT TO LEARN WHEN I SAW THEM PLAY. I THINK THEY WERE ONE OF THE GREATEST THREE-PIECE GROUPS YOU'LL EVER SEE."
Buddy Guy

"THE INTERPLAY IN CREAM INFLUENCED EVERY OTHER BAND THAT WAS HAPPENING. THEY WERE A TRIO AND EVERYBODY WAS A SUPERSTAR."
Carmine Appice (Vanilla Fudge, Cactus, Beck Bogert & Appice)

"I THINK CLAPTON'S THE GREATEST ROCK'N'ROLL AND BLUES GUITAR PLAYER THAT EVER LIVED. ANYONE WHO SAYS HE AIN'T IS FULL OF SHIT, UNLESS THEY'RE NOT VERY GOOD."
Gary Rossington (Lynyrd Skynyrd)

"EVERY MUSICIAN LOVED CREAM, AND THEY STILL DO. WHEN WE STARTED OUT, THREE OR FOUR CREAM SONGS WERE IN EVERYBODY'S REPERTOIRE."
Dusty Hill (ZZ Top)

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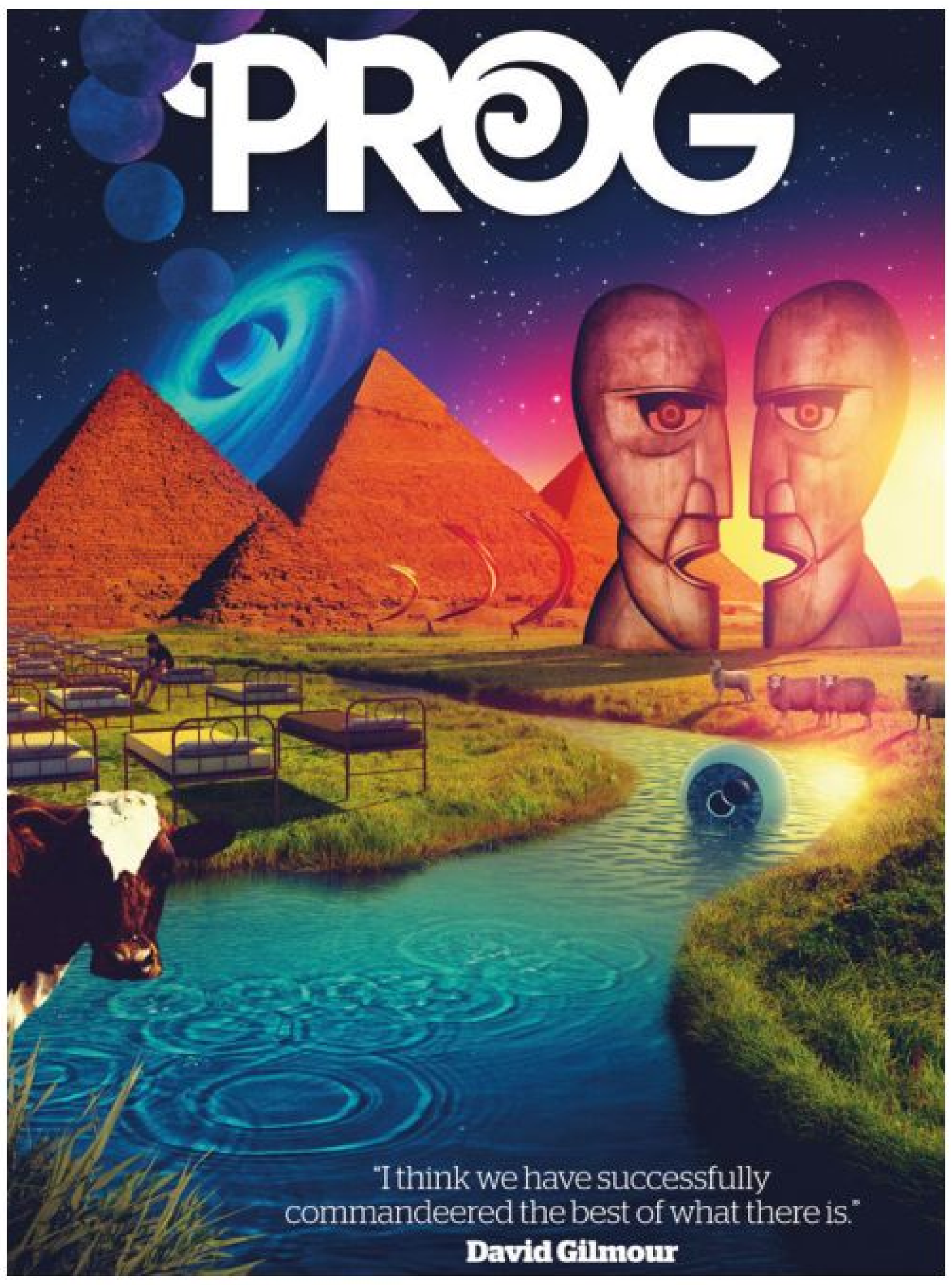

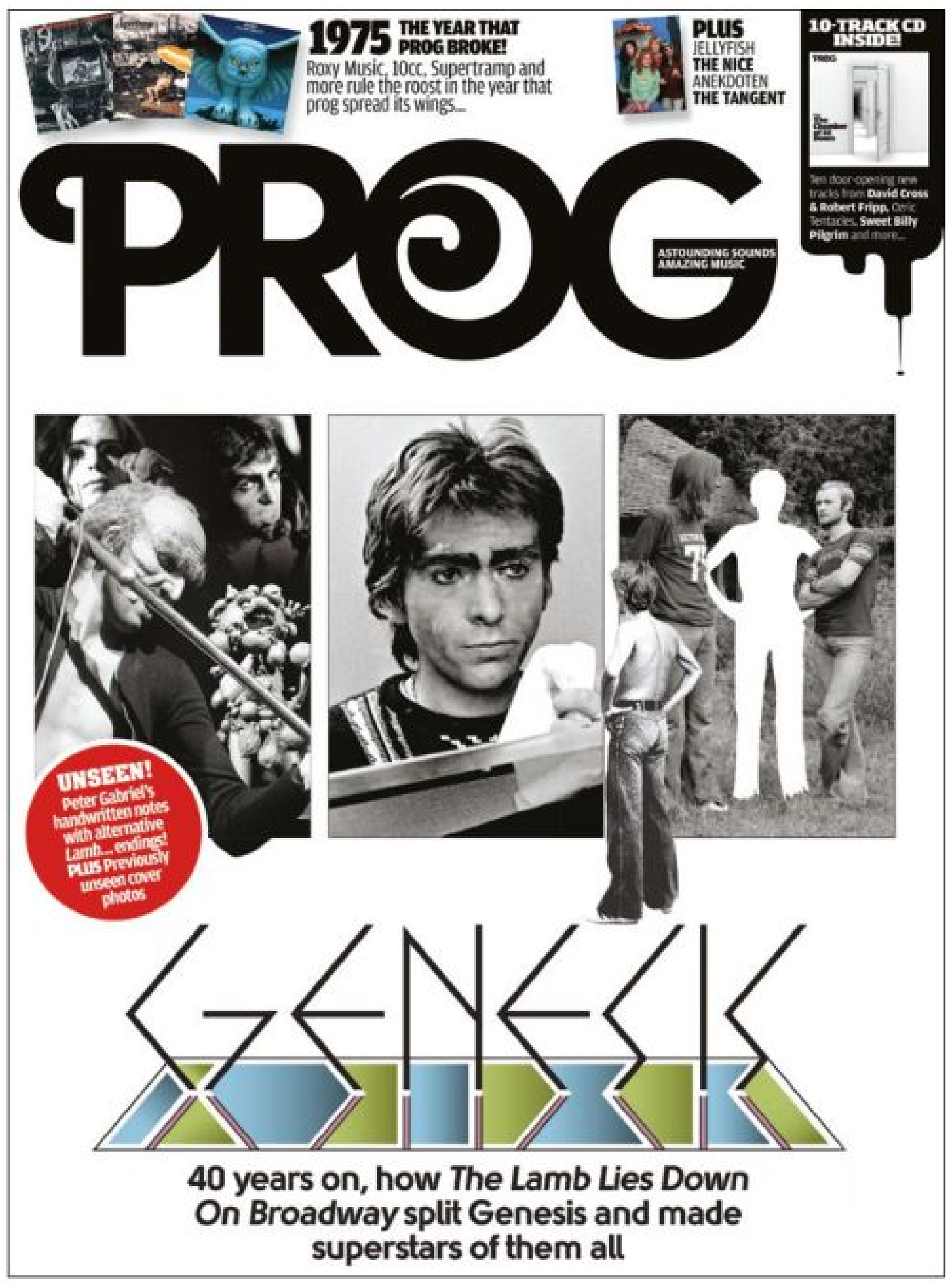

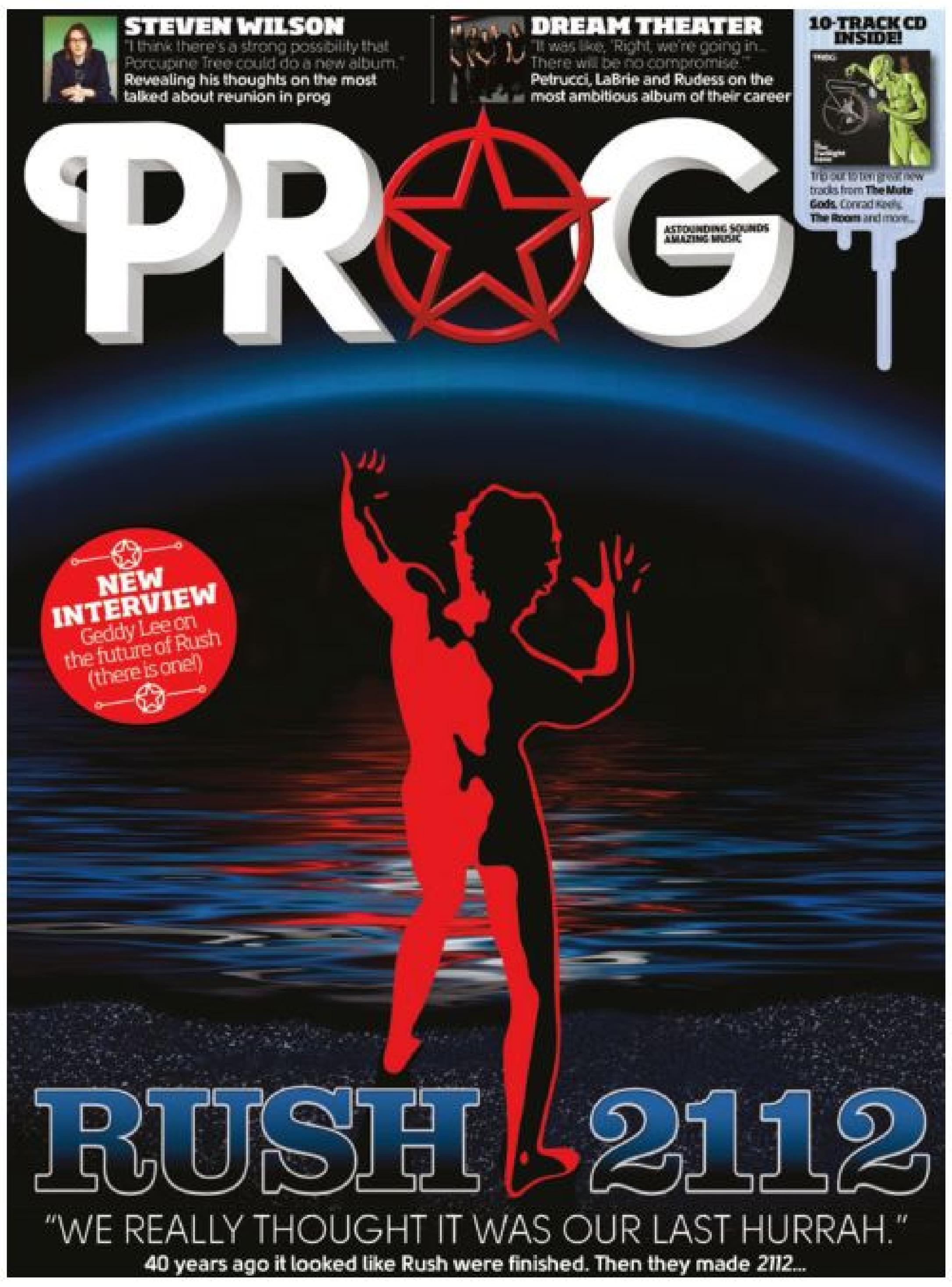

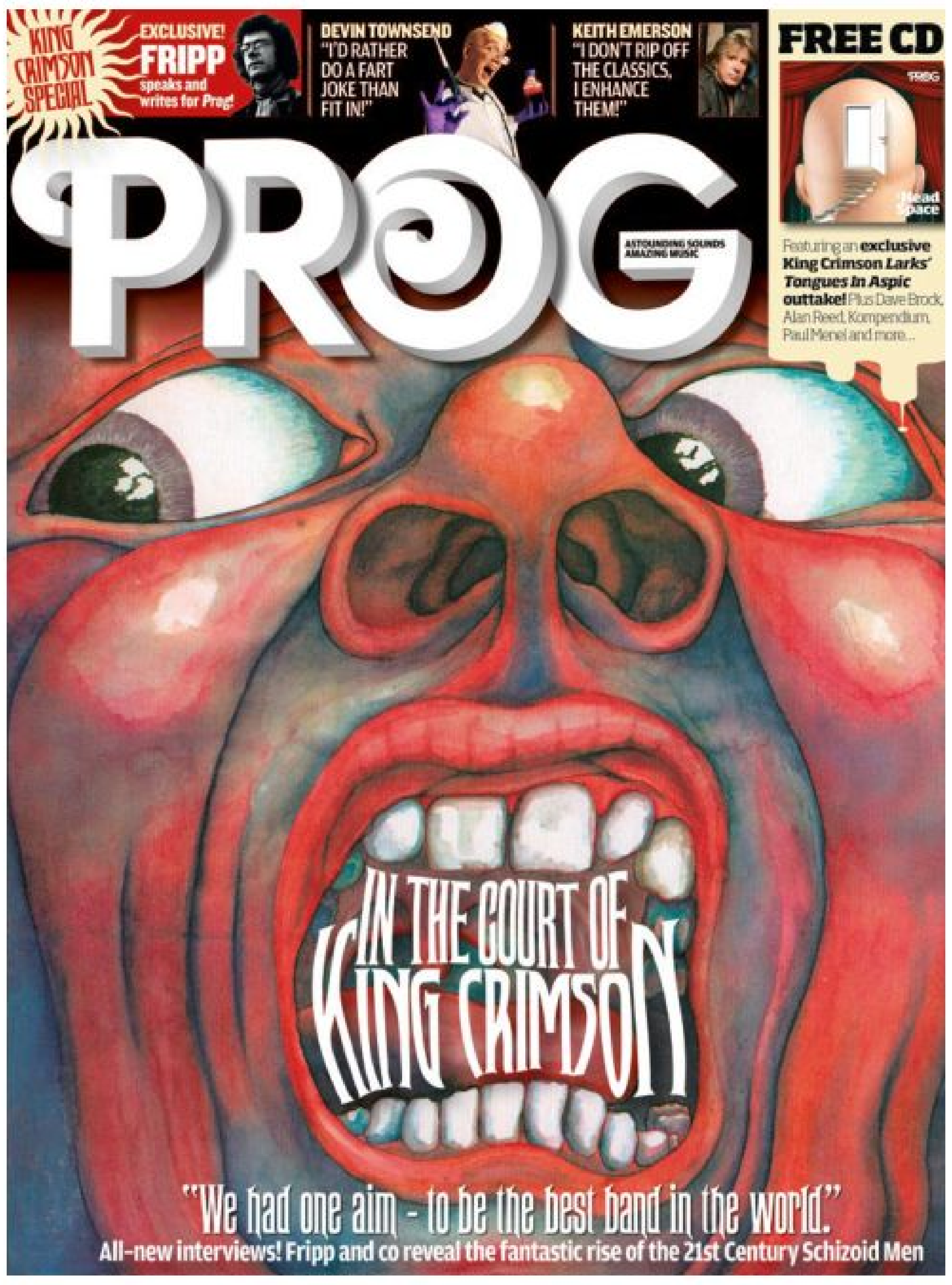

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Blind ambition: (l to r) Steve Winwood, Rick Grech, Ginger Baker and Eric Clapton.

GETTY

Blind Faith

Vocalist/keyboard player **Steve Winwood** looks back at being in the first ever supergroup.

"By the spring of 1969 I had reached a kind of impasse with Traffic. I'd started jamming quite a bit with Eric Clapton at the Traffic cottage in Aston Tirrold and at his house in Surrey, Hurtwood. One night there was a knock at our door and there was Ginger [Baker], who had got wind of a possible new group. I was all for having him in, and it wasn't until I read Eric's book years later that I realised he wasn't so keen on that idea. That shows you how little we spoke about these serious situations.

"Anyhow, Blind Faith came into being. And there were immediate problems – with egos, with management and organisation. Those are all massive problems for a supergroup. The trouble is, when you start with the idea for a new group you have the whole of your life to figure out what you're going to do, how to fine tune it and hone the act. Then, if it's successful your next problem is: what do we do next? You get stuck for a follow-up. It's all about timing. You have to move very quickly on to the next project and make sure it isn't a pale imitation of the debut.

"I blame the industry in part, for putting pressure on supergroups, because you're trying to present a product to the world at large and every minute you take is money lost as far the business is concerned. They're so excited with their supergroup, they want more. The result of that pressure is you start making mistakes, because you can't just throw something together.

"Maybe it was better that Blind Faith lasted for such a short time, but I loved it initially. At least the record we left, *Blind Faith*, was pretty good and stands up well. In retrospect, people even think it has a few classics on there, like *Presence Of The Lord* and *Can't Find My Way Home*.

"So we didn't make a bad second, album but we did go on the road. And therein lay another problem. Because of our stature – me in Traffic and, more so, Eric and Ginger in Cream – we were booked into big places that were more suited to heavy rock stuff, whereas we were into messing around with tinkling guitars and subtle music. The Hyde Park debut, our free concert on June 7, 1969 was in front of at least 100,000 people, but the audience who came had no real idea what we were about. People saw Blind Faith before they heard them. It was a great gig, actually, even though we were still wrestling with the concept. We didn't really know what we were about. We should have paid more attention to the record, in hindsight. But that's easy to say now.

> **"Three people had three different managers. Later I realised some awful decisions were made on our behalf."**
>
> **Steve Winwood**

"Management was also a problem. Three people had three different managers. Later I realised some awful decisions were made on our behalf. Everything becomes contractual – you appear 'by arrangement with…' It becomes business, which is dispiriting for the musicians. It wasn't easy to resolve.

"It didn't take long until things came to a head, in America, because by now Eric already had his eye on many other things, like Delaney And Bonnie. And we just sort of disintegrated in the States. Blind Faith only lasted a few months, and by the end of it I didn't really know where I was going."

(*Steve Winwood interviewed by Max Bell.*)

***MUST HEAR**: Had To Cry Today (from Blind Faith, 1969)*

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CAN YOU PICTURE WHAT WILL BE?

In late August 1966, **The Doors** entered the studio to record their debut album. Released five months later, it laid down a singular marker that still resonates today.

Words: **Mick Wall**

The Whisky A Go Go, West Hollywood, May 1966, after midnight. Jac Holzman, 35-year-old owner of Elektra Records, just arrived on the red-eye from New York, is blearily checking out this new band that club manager Ronnie Haran keeps bugging him about. They're called The Doors, and Ronnie says they are far out, man, trippy. And they have a to-die-for 22-year-old singer that even the boys want to lick the face of. Holzman, who has recently signed the band Love – whose lysergically depth-charged debut album he also produced – has absolutely no interest in signing another psychedelic rock band. But Love's leader, Arthur Lee, has also hipped him to these new cats, The Doors, and so Holzman feels obliged to at least give them the once-over.

Holzman, though, is not impressed by The Doors. "Morrison made no impression whatsoever," he would tell me years later. "There was nothing that tagged him as special."

Indeed, Holzman recalls being so underwhelmed he walked out mid-set. But then Haran insisted he come back the following night. Jim was acting up, she said, refusing to put on a show for the record company 'suit' Arthur Lee had told him was in the audience. Which is how Holzman found himself back at the Whisky the following night, watching The Doors all over again. But still no eureka moment. Just a band bashing out a terse form of blues with vague classical and jazz leanings. Nevertheless, everyone Holzman talked to in LA now seemed to have a bead on The Doors. When Barry Friedman, the former Beatles publicist who had recently begun managing one of LA's other hottest new bands, Buffalo Springfield, started babbling about them too, Holzman went back to the Whisky the next night – and the next.

"The question I ask myself when I look at any artist is: is this music something I haven't heard before?" explains Holzman. "Well, it wasn't the first two or three nights but it was the last night. Sometimes there are songs ⊳

The Doors in London in 1968 for a *Top Of The Pops* appearance.

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that are like Rosetta Stones, and once I heard [their version of] *Alabama Song (Whisky Bar)*, I got the rest of it. All the gaps just filled in."

Because The Doors "had taken something that was so off the wall" – a 1925 song written for Bertolt Brecht and set to music by Kurt Weill – "and converted it into a song that could appear on a rock album," Holzman finally got what The Doors' monochromatic, mock-Weimar cabaret sound was all about. Where every other band in 1966 was extolling a wide-eyed gambol through the acid-kissed prism of love-love-love, The Doors appeared as the antithesis to all that, the dark angel come to eat its own children. Fuck its own mother; kill its own father.

Holzman approached the band in their dressing room at the Whisky that same night.

"When I heard that fourth night I knew this was a great band," he says. "I wanted to be where nobody else was yet."

Which was exactly where Morrison and The Doors lay in wait for Holzman and the rest of the world to find them.

In truth, the four members of The Doors could not believe their luck. They had been turned down by every record company on the West Coast, their only previous deal with Columbia having petered out before they'd even recorded anything, and though they didn't know it yet they were mere days away from being fired from the only steady gig they had. If Jac Holzman had walked into their dressing room wearing a Santa Claus outfit and carrying a sackful of cash, he could not have made a more welcoming impression. Nevertheless, true to form, Jim Morrison urged the others – keyboardist Ray Manzarek, guitarist Robby Krieger and drummer John Densmore – to play it cool. As a result, says Holzman, he was forced to go "through the agony of a summer trying to nurse them toward signing [the deal], which did not occur until several months later."

Ronnie Haran, who Morrison was then living with, advised the band to get a good lawyer, suggesting they use hers – but they turned down the offer. This caused bad blood and Jim was forced to move out of Ronnie's apartment. As he was leaving, he told her, "I'll be dead in two years." But Jim was always saying stuff like that.

CAN YOU PICTURE WHAT WILL BE?
THE DOORS

"When I heard that fourth night [at the Whisky], I knew this was a great band."

Jac Holzman, owner of Elektra Records

In the end they followed the advice of Robby's father, Stu Krieger, who put them together with the deliciously named Max Fink, a big-cigar Hollywood attorney who knew his way around the back alleys of LA as well as he did its glitzy front offices.

Fink ate out-of-town New York suits like Holzman for breakfast – or told The Doors he did – and set about his work with relish, drafting a letter of agreement that everybody signed on August 20, allowing The Doors and Elektra to proceed with recording an album, but delaying any long-term deal until the contract was finally agreed in November.

Any other record company chief would have walked away. Fortunately for The Doors, Jac Holzman was not any other record company chief. The eldest son of a Park Avenue doctor, Jac was a super-smart boy who studied Descartes at college, and who would bring his gift for minute analysis and almost geometrical calculation to all his future dealings.

"I wanted people to think of Elektra as different to the others," he says. Well, they certainly did that. By the time he met The Doors, Holzman's Elektra had become one of the leading independent record labels in the world. Three weeks later The Doors were ensconced in Sunset Sound Recorders, a bare-knuckles Hollywood recording facility purpose-built by Walt Disney in 1958 to record the soundtracks to *Mary Poppins* and *101 Dalmatians*.

Originally, Holzman had considered producing The Doors' debut album himself. But after meeting Jim he turned the job over to his right-hand man, the producer Paul A Rothchild.

"I loved the studio, but I thought Paul knew more than I did about how to do this kind of band," Holzman explained. "Ray and Jim were super-smart, and you needed a guy who was as well read as they were, and Paul was that. I thought he could really whip them into shape."

At 31, Rothchild was just old enough to exert authority over the group, just young enough to be hip to their trip. A classically trained musician from New Jersey, who had been groomed for success by his mother, a singer with the Metropolitan Opera, Rothchild had trained under the tutelage of the conductor Bruno Walter. Swept up by the folk revival, he found himself in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the board of Club 47, the small but significant venue in the Harvard Square area of Cambridge where Joan Baez gave her very first concert, barefoot, in 1958.

The next few years found Rothchild working as a Boston-area record distributor, while also trying to make his mark as a producer. By 1964, Rothchild had relocated to New York, where he hooked up with fellow folk-rock enthusiast Jac Holzman and produced his first albums for Elektra Records.

Clad in regulation skintight jeans, even tighter T-shirt or often as not no shirt at all, his long hair tied in a ponytail to distract attention from the fact that he was already balding, Rothchild would come striding through the studio door, avoiding all eye contact until he was settled behind the console, where he would snap open his briefcase. "The briefcase was famous," says Holzman. "It held everything he might possibly need: pitch pipe, the latest gadgets, cigarettes, whatever drug was up for the evening."

Paul was a loner, super-focused and as self-absorbed as any artist. "He could do a 'Hey man' to the artist," as Holzman put it. Plus, Paul owed Jac big – and despite reservations gave in when Jac reminded him of it. Rothchild had just been released from prison after serving eight months of a two-year sentence for possession of marijuana – several suitcases full of the stuff. While Paul had been incarcerated, Jac had given his wife part-time work at Elektra, to help her meet the bills.

First, though, Rothchild insisted he work with the band at some intense pre-production rehearsals. "The arrangements and the way things went, were a lot Paul Rothchild," Holzman says. The prime example was *Light My Fire*, which the stickler-for-detail producer sculpted from the musical miasma of its sprawling live incarnation into something with real shape and gravitas.

Even though they were there with Rothchild – and his engineer Bruce Botnick, who had previously worked with the producer on Tim Buckley's first album – for less than a week, The Doors "owned Studio B" at Sunset Sound. Yet the band was so paranoid about being ripped off, at the end of every session the doors would be double-locked. Dropping in on the sessions, Holzman was also convinced this was precious cargo.

"It was for Elektra Records, so I knew it was going be different," Botnick now recalls. While Rothchild had the "vision thing" – converting an extremely functional four-track facility into a late-night netherworld where Jim and the band could let their nocturnal spirits roam, even as he obliged them to do different takes, teasing the best performances out of them – the 23-year- ▷

Producer Paul Rothchild (right) works his magic in the studio.

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old Botnick's job was to be Mr Fixit, getting the set-up right, keeping the tape rolling, placing bafflers and mics, helping Paul fly the faders, coming up with the little extras that might make the difference.

"Jim was in the vocal booth. The guys were in the studio itself. It's 10 feet apart at the most. They could see one another. I always kept the lights dark in the studio. You know, they needed to have that. Down to screwing in some red light bulbs in the studio that glowed like that."

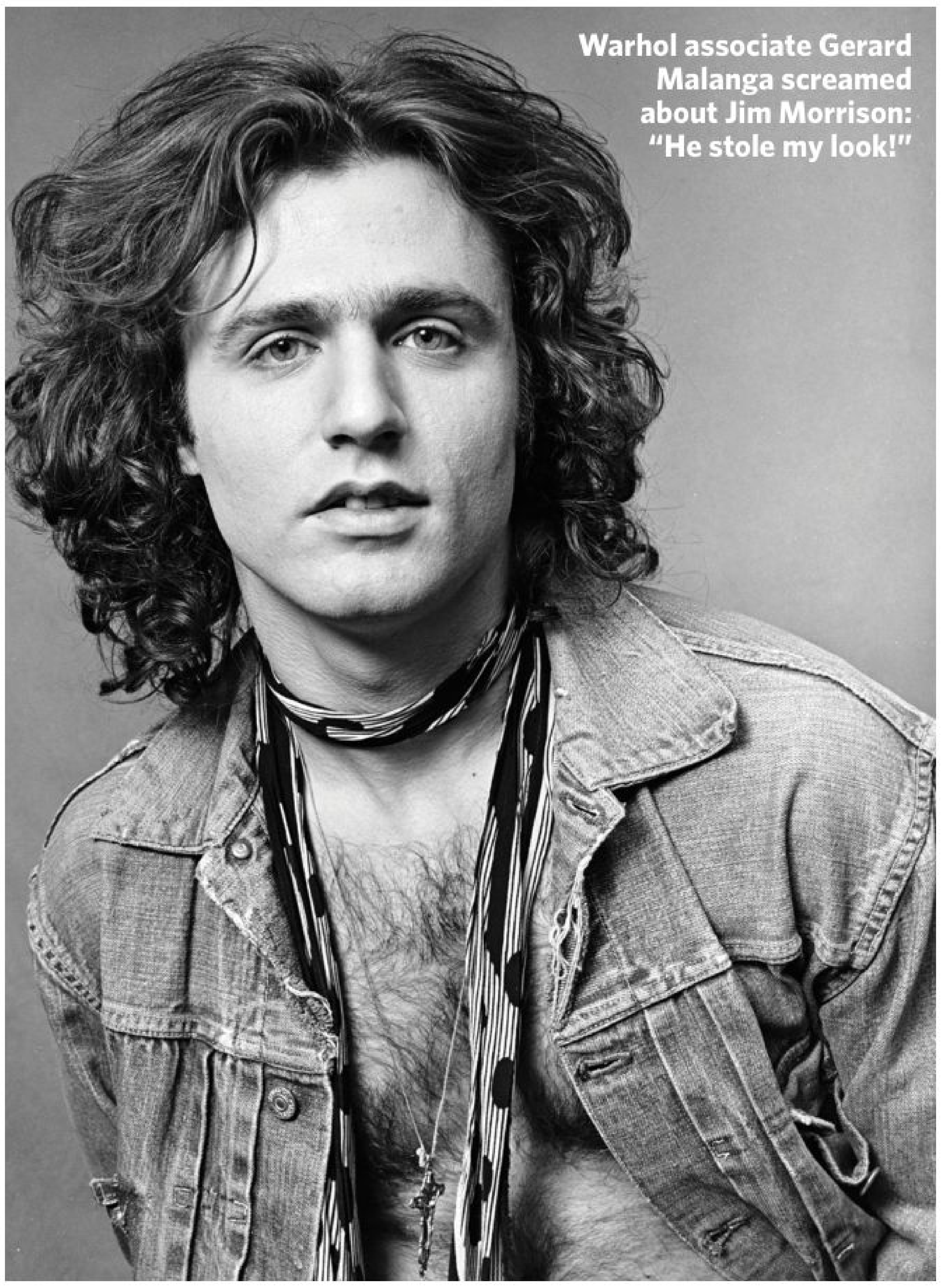
The first day the band arrived in the studio, Botnick recalls, "they had pretty much the first two albums ready to go. The thought that Paul had was that we were to be invisible – to allow them to capture the magic of The Doors as you went to hear them." He adds: "They were totally different than anything else I was recording. I was recording the Beach Boys, The Turtles, The Ventures… and The Doors were totally different, it was the beginning of that era of American sixties music."

Bassist Larry Knechtel, part of the top LA-based session outfit the Wrecking Crew, who had played on dozens of hit records throughout the 60s, was hired to play on six of the album's eventual 11 tracks, with Ray handling the others on keyboard bass. Only three of the studio's four tracks of tape were actually used – drums and bass on one, guitar and keyboards on another, and Jim's vocals on the third – with the fourth track kept back for overdubs.

Apart from the album's two cornerstone tracks – the seven-minute-plus *Light My Fire* and the nearly 12-minute *The End* – most of the tracks were less than three minutes long. But then, in truth, despite regularly being hailed since as one of the all-time great rock debuts, the first Doors album was a mixed bag of disposable 60s pop and a truly gothic form of rock, with layers of Indian raga, jazz stylings and neo-classical pretensions.

While tracks like the rousing, call-to-arms opener, *Break On Through (To The Other Side)* and the genuinely spaced-out *Crystal Ship*, with its, for the times, outlandish opening couplet: *'Before you slip into, un-con-scious-ness…'*, suggested a very different, far more advanced, into-the-night type of rock band than any seen before, others like *Soul Kitchen* – inspired by the band's fondness for a cheap and cheerful Venice Beach soul-food joint called Olivia's – and *Twentieth Century Fox* – a droolingly stoned play on words, geddit? – are so wincingly à la mode they would have struggled to get on the first Monkees album, also being made that summer.

The painfully peacocking *I Looked At You* sounds like a Paul Revere & The Raiders B-side. Other tracks, such as *End Of The Night* – another self-consciously spooky interlude with only its Céline-inspired title to guide it – and the deliriously vacuous *Take It As It Comes* sound like what they are: side salads for the real steaks on the plate: *Light My Fire*, with its grandiose Bach-fugue intro and swirling instrumental middle section inspired by John Coltrane's *Olé*, and *The End*, the only truly riveting musical journey into the mystic they make, which, fittingly, closes the album.



Warhol associate Gerard Malanga screamed about Jim Morrison: "He stole my look!"

CAN YOU PICTURE WHAT WILL BE?
THE DOORS

"They were totally different from anything else I was recording... It was the beginning of that era of American sixties music."

Bruce Botnick

Given the inclusion also of two cover songs – their admittedly inspired live reading of *Alabama Song (Whisky Bar)* – and Jim's thinly veiled reference to his growing obsession with anal sex, Willie Dixon's *Back Door Man* (every groupie on Sunset Strip was now privately complaining about how Jim was pestering them for it) – it seems strange that they didn't consider including some of the other tracks they already had completed, specifically, the truly transcendent *Moonlight Drive* and the equally ethereal *Indian Summer* – or at the very least, if they were looking for a hit, *Hello, I Love You*. All of which were recorded during the sessions – and would be included on future Doors albums – but passed over when it came to the final sequencing of their debut.

According to Robby Krieger, the beautiful *Indian Summer*, though it would not be released for another four years, was the first song the band ever fully completed, with *Moonlight Drive* coming after. But Paul Rothchild had decided they needed more upbeat numbers so *Indian Summer* got nixed in favour of *Back Door Man*, and the original version they cut of *Moonlight Drive* they simply didn't think was good enough. (Listening to the track on the contemporary re-mastered CD version of the album, released after Rothchild's death in 1995, it's hard to disagree.)

"Every day we got something great," Rothchild would recall. "Jim was out of control on some days, but that was just another aspect of that phenomenon: the Jim Morrison spirit! Because we were recording when Jim was at one of his most insane points, when he was deep into acid." They would try various different songs, do a few takes then move on to another. They even tried having a go at *The End* on the first night but it just wasn't happening. So they got it on the second night instead, shrugged Rothchild.

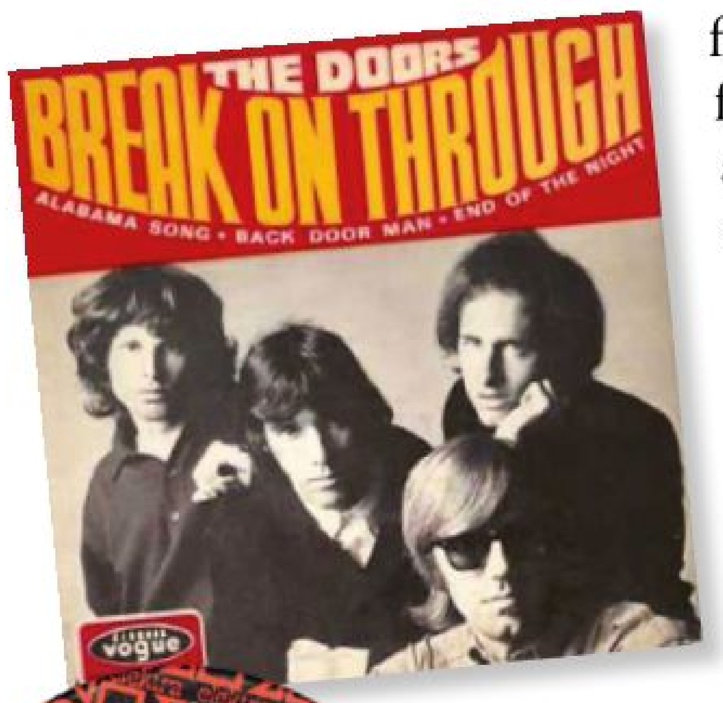
In fact, the recording of *The End*, which would eventually roll out to almost 12 minutes in length – unheard of for a rock song at that time – precipitated one of the most oft-told, yet always exaggerated stories from the making of the first Doors album. According to legend, the band was two-thirds of the way through playing the track, just after Jim had turned his on-stage announcement of wanting to fuck his mother into an incoherent yowl, and as he began to dervish around the studio he noticed – oh, the insult! – that Bruce Botnick was watching a small black-and-white TV tuned to a baseball game, which Jim, absolutely furious, smashed to the floor before picking it up and hurling it through the studio glass into the control room, where Botnick and Rothchild sat shocked.

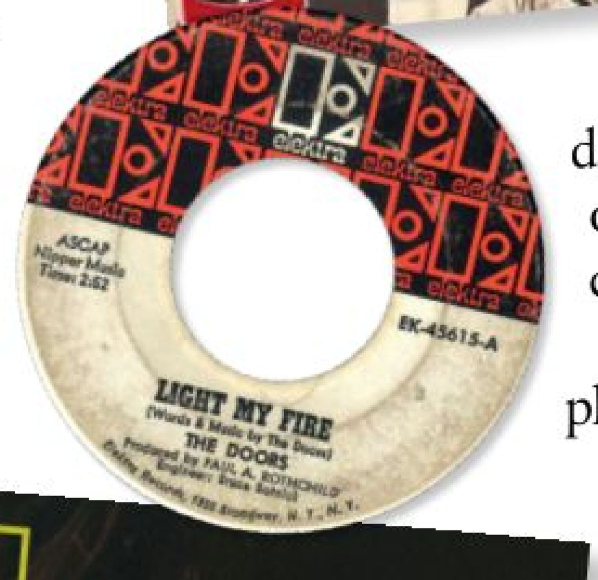
Speaking now, however, Botnick sighs and claims it was a far less dramatic moment.

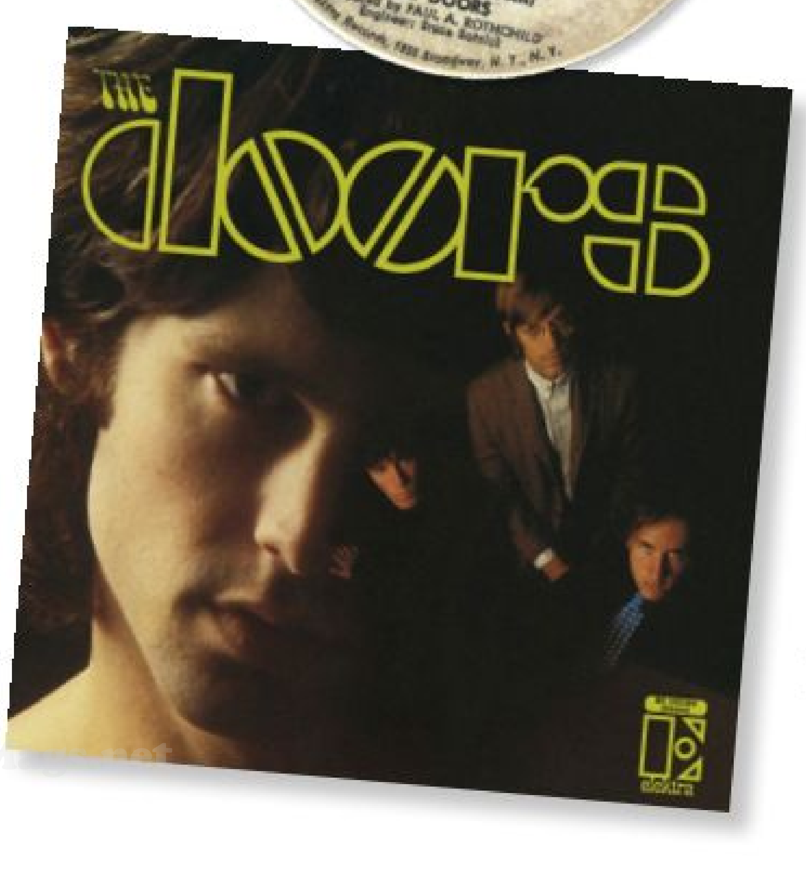
"I don't know why I did this but I had this Sony TV, a little one, on a stool looking into the control room."

The Los Angeles Dodgers were playing the St Louis Cardinals with the baseball legend Sandy Koufax pitching. As far as Bruce – who had no idea yet who The Doors were – was concerned, he'd simply brought the TV into work with him to catch the game – with the sound off.

"And in [Jim's] flying around he knocked it off. It did not explode. It did not catch on fire. He did not pick it up and throw it through the







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The Doors were much more than just Jim Morrison: (l-r) John Densmore, Jim Morrison, Robby Krieger, Ray Manzarek.

glass as Ray Manzarek said that he did. None of that happened. But he knocked it off and yes it went on the floor, and the tape continued. In between takes I walked out into the studio and got it and turned it off. And then we did a second take. *The End* comprises two takes and we edited it together – the first half and the second half. For the performance aspect we made the cut. Because everything that happened on that album was based on performance."

The other flashpoint from those sessions that has since gone down in history has also been exaggerated, according to Botnick: the one in which a fiercely tripping Morrison – on the same night they completed splicing the two best performances of '*The End* together – returned alone to Sunset Sound and proceeded to trash the studio, throwing ashtray-sand over the floor and emptying a fire extinguisher into the mixing console.

According to Botnick, though, this was not merely an act of acid-crazed petulance, but a genuine attempt, albeit with lid flapping wide open, to avert what Morrison saw as a disaster.

"Sunset Sound was an old garage [that had] been converted. It was absorption, brick, absorption, brick… Inside each brick was a light, and that's where I screwed the red light bulbs."

After everyone had left the studio that night, Jim had "gone across the street to the Blessed Sacrament, a Catholic Church, and he had an epiphany over there. He came back to the studio and the gate was locked. He climbed over the gate, got in but he couldn't get in the control room. That was locked. But the studio was open and the red lights were on and he thought it was on fire so he grabbed a fire extinguisher and knocked over the ashtrays that were full of sand and tried to put out the fire."

Recalling the incident at the time, however, Rothchild said he'd received a phone call from the chick Jim had left the session with, saying Jim had jumped out of her car and was headed back to the studio. When Paul got there Jim was shoeless and shirtless. When Paul asked him what the fuck, he just grinned that slow-burn grin and said: "I want to record." Paul talked him down and they retired to Jim's pad, where they spent the rest of the night digging the Stones, Donovan, Howlin' Wolf… Paul finally escaped around dawn.

As he walked through the door of his Laurel Canyon home his phone was ringing. It was studio owner, Tutti Camarata, apoplectic with rage, saying the studio had been trashed: fire extinguisher foam all over the mixing console, sand from a stand-up ashtray hurled across the room. Also a pair of Jim's old stinky boots… Did Paul know who they belonged to? Paul said he did not. Then told him wearily to send the bill to Elektra.

CAN YOU PICTURE WHAT WILL BE?
THE DOORS

"We perform a musical séance. Not to *raise* the dead, but to palliate the dead, to ease the pain and the suffering of the dead and the living."

Jim Morrison

In the end, despite the stoned immaculate shenanigans of both band and producer, the first Doors album – simply titled *The Doors* – took just five days to make. Yet it took five months for Elektra to finally release it. This was almost entirely down to the fact that it took another three months of ▷

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Jim Morrison shot in Los Angeles on New Year's Day, 1968.

Trampled underfoot: The Doors performing on top of an American flag in 1968.

interminable contractual wrangling between Holzman and Fink before they finally agreed a deal. Jim and Ray had pushed at that point for the album to be released immediately, in time for Christmas. But Jac, the wise old label head, knew better and talked them into allowing Elektra to hold back its release until the new year.

Ray and the rest of the band acquiesced, realising they had no choice in the matter anyway. But Jim threw a tantrum and again needed to be talked down. As Holzman later recalled, even then Jim and the other three members of The Doors were "really two entities: Ray Manzarek–Robby Krieger–John Densmore, and Jim Morrison, separate and apart."

Morrison was now living in a nine-dollars-a-night room at The Tropicana ('The Trop', as Jim called it), the rundown West Hollywood motel where the black-tiled pool had no water and the guests festered, sharing their drugs and cheap wine, bed-hopping and stealing from each other; the kind of low-rent dive where all the musicians that hadn't yet made it stayed.

Meanwhile, the other three Doors still lived in either the comfort of their parents' house (John and Robby) or with their live-in partner out by the Beach (Ray and his future wife Dorothy). There was Jim, and there were The Others. Holzman got this immediately, and decided early on that the key to working successfully with The Doors would be to always keep Jim happy.

CAN YOU PICTURE WHAT WILL BE?
THE DOORS

"The insane sexuality of Jim drove the establishment right over the edge."

Ray Manzarek

Jac painted Jim a picture of the kind of campaign Elektra would build around the album when it was finally released in January 1967: "I said: 'We'll have more time to prepare for you and I'll release no other album that month, which means you've got Elektra working a hundred per cent on your album for the first month. And by the way, I have this idea about putting a billboard up on Sunset Strip…' Well, that caught Jim. He loved that idea. He said: 'Where'd you come up with that?'"

True to his word, Holzman got his Elektra staff so cranked up on The Doors they could talk of nothing else right through the Christmas holidays, then added the promised cherry of making The Doors the first rock band ever to feature on one of Hollywood's giant billboards overlooking the Strip.

By then, though, The Doors were starting to feel a sense of entitlement that would soon outgrow a dozen billboards on Sunset Boulevard. A November 1966 residency in New York at the ultra-hip nightclub Ondine's had seen to that. When Andy Warhol walked with his entourage the first night, he recalled Gerard Malanga – the college dropout-poet-actor-scenester who had appeared in five of Andy's celebrated 'art movies' before he was 22 – freaking out, screaming about Jim: "He stole my look!"

It was true. When Warhol's Exploding Plastic Inevitable, as it was dubbed, set up at The Trip in Los Angeles, in May '66, Jim had been so impressed by Malanga's macho, crotch-bulging, leather-trousered presence, dancing in a Marlon Brando T-shirt, lifting toy barbells and pretending to shoot up with lighted candles, he immediately set about appropriating the look for his own purposes.

By the time The Doors arrived in New York six months later, Morrison's leather pants and shirt open to the navel look new look were an established part of his act – and an immediate hit with all the women at Doors shows, who were now starting to outnumber the men. With Elektra now pushing The Doors as 'the American Rolling Stones', this was a masterly piece of PR equating the recent hit Stones album, *Aftermath* – a glowering, almost gothic work that had been a turning point for the Stones – with the crazy, head-spinning trip The Doors were about to take you on.

As Ray Manzarek would tell me: "As Jim once said: 'We perform a musical séance. Not to raise the dead, but to palliate the dead, to ease the pain and the suffering of the dead and the living.' And in doing that we dove into areas that were deeply, deeply Freudian, and psychologically deeply Jungian at the same time. So we were a merging of both Freud and Jung. Which might seem impossible, but it happened on stage, and really upset the establishment. There was just something about the power in the music, and that insane sexuality of Jim Morrison, that drove the establishment right over the edge."

One convert was Gloria Stavers, a 39-year-old former model. Then editor of *16* magazine, at the time the biggest-circulation teen mag in America, Stavers had once been Lenny Bruce's girlfriend, and had helped, through her patronage, turn Herman's Hermits into bigger stars in America than both The Beatles and the Stones. Gloria liked to photograph the bands herself, inviting them to her New York loft apartment, where if all went well the session would conclude in her bedroom. When the freelance writer-turned-ad-hoc Elektra publicist Danny Fields arranged for Jim and The Doors to spend an afternoon being shot at Gloria's apartment, the band were quickly dismissed while she got down to her real work: photographing – then seducing – Jim. ▷

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The Doors in 1967.

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According to Fields, "she was giving [Jim] a blowjob – and she swears he vanished; he dematerialised and was sitting on the other side of the room," he laughed. However implausible Jim's dematerialisation mid-blowjob may be, the fact is that when *The Doors* was released in January 1967, it would be Jim's image on the cover of *16* that month, under the heading: 'Morrison is Magic!'

Andy Warhol, meanwhile, was now plotting to get Jim to star in his next movie project, simply called *Fuck*. He begged Jim to let him film him having sex with Velvet Underground chanteuse Nico. When Jim laughed in his face, Andy wheedled: would he at least allow him to film Nico giving Jim a blowjob? "Fuck off, Andy."

Jim now seriously considered changing his name to James Phoenix, going so far as to request that Elektra alter his credits on the forthcoming album sleeve. The rest of the band assumed he wanted to sound more like a Warholian rock star, but secretly Jim was more concerned that his growing reputation for debauchery might badly impact on his estranged father's career in the US military, where he would soon be a Rear Admiral.

When the others talked him out of it – "It just sounded dumb, even for a warrior poet," explained Ray disingenuously – he settled instead for merely being an orphan. Back in LA for Christmas, when Elektra requested biographical information from the four band members so that they could assemble a press package in readiness for the album's release in January, Jim claimed his whole family were dead. When asked standard stuff for 1966 like: who are your favourite singers? He replied: "Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley." This was no joke, though. He adored both singers, did everything he could to try to sound like them. When asked for his personal philosophy, however, Jim couldn't help himself and gave it both barrels: "It's the feeling of a bowstring being pulled back for twenty-two years and suddenly being let go… I've always been attracted to ideas that were about revolt against authority. I am interested in anything about revolt, disorder, chaos – especially activity that seems to have no meaning."

Elektra, though, had their own ideas about the 'meaning' some people might take from Doors songs, and, to the band's dismay, decided unilaterally to edit the first single from the album, *Break On Through (To The Other Side)* so that the line '*She gets high*', which Jim sings four times, on the single version scanned as, '*She gets… she gets… she gets… she gets…*' This became the version the group were forced to mime to in their first ever television appearance, on *Shebang*, on January 1, 1967. You can see the frustration in Jim's wincingly subdued performance, barely bothering to move his lips, eyes wide shut, as he stands there, all gussied up for the cameras in fawn-coloured trousers tapered at the ankles, black shirt and dark hunting jacket, but with an attitude as sullen as a teenage punk-girl forced to wear a pretty dress for the prom.

That performance stands in marked contrast to the film clip that Holzman commissioned to shoot: a suitably noir-ish colour clip defined by its stark black tones, no one but a snarling Jim seen for the first minute, and then only the heavily silhouetted form of Ray stooped over his keyboards, the priest at his lectern, Robby not getting a look in until the song is almost over. Yet it was this dark, somnambulant quality – the antithesis of the bright Californian mien of The Byrds, the Beach Boys – that helped define The Doors as different, special. So that when the clip aired on the LA TV show *Boss City*, it resulted in the band's first serious plays on local radio.

None of this, though, gave the single the impetus it needed to 'go national'; that is, give The Doors their first recognisable countrywide hit.

Danny Fields claims it was he who first brought the commercial potential of *Light My Fire* to the attention of Holzman. "They'd already released another one, but it was *Light My Fire* that made all the difference, that made the company from a small, classy company into a marketplace force."

Speaking now, Holzman insists *Light My Fire* had always been in his thoughts, pointing out that the full seven-minute version from the album was already being played on the new, longer-format stereo FM stations.

"I was counting on FM radio to force AM radio to play it." The problem was AM had strict rules about 'needle-time' – no shorter than two minutes 45 seconds, no longer than three minutes. So Jac asked Paul to cut an edited version that would fit. Paul was sceptical. Jac told him to get on with it. The producer eventually cut out nearly five minutes' worth of the solos Ray and Robby had spent so long perfecting. The result was the defining hit song of the Summer of Love. And nobody, not even Jac Holzman, could have predicted that.

CAN YOU PICTURE WHAT WILL BE?
THE DOORS

"He never really looked that way again. I photographed Morrison at his peak."

Joel Brodsky

The band's only real stipulation, made at Jim's instigation, was that the band be an equal four-part democracy, with all songwriting credits split equally and credited simply to The Doors, and that all decisions pertaining to their music and business had to be unanimous before they could be acted on. It seemed like the perfect all-for-one strategy to bind them against whatever vicissitudes having a major record company and management behind them might bring; if everything else failed, they would have each other. It was a decision they would all later regret, in one way or another.

Meanwhile, with both *Break On Through (To The Other Side)* and *The Doors* now on release, and Sal and Asher working their mojo, the start of 1967 found the band appearing in San Francisco for the first of two weekends at Bill Graham's famous Fillmore, opening on bills headlined by the Young Rascals the first weekend, the Grateful Dead the second.

A week later The Doors were back in New ▷

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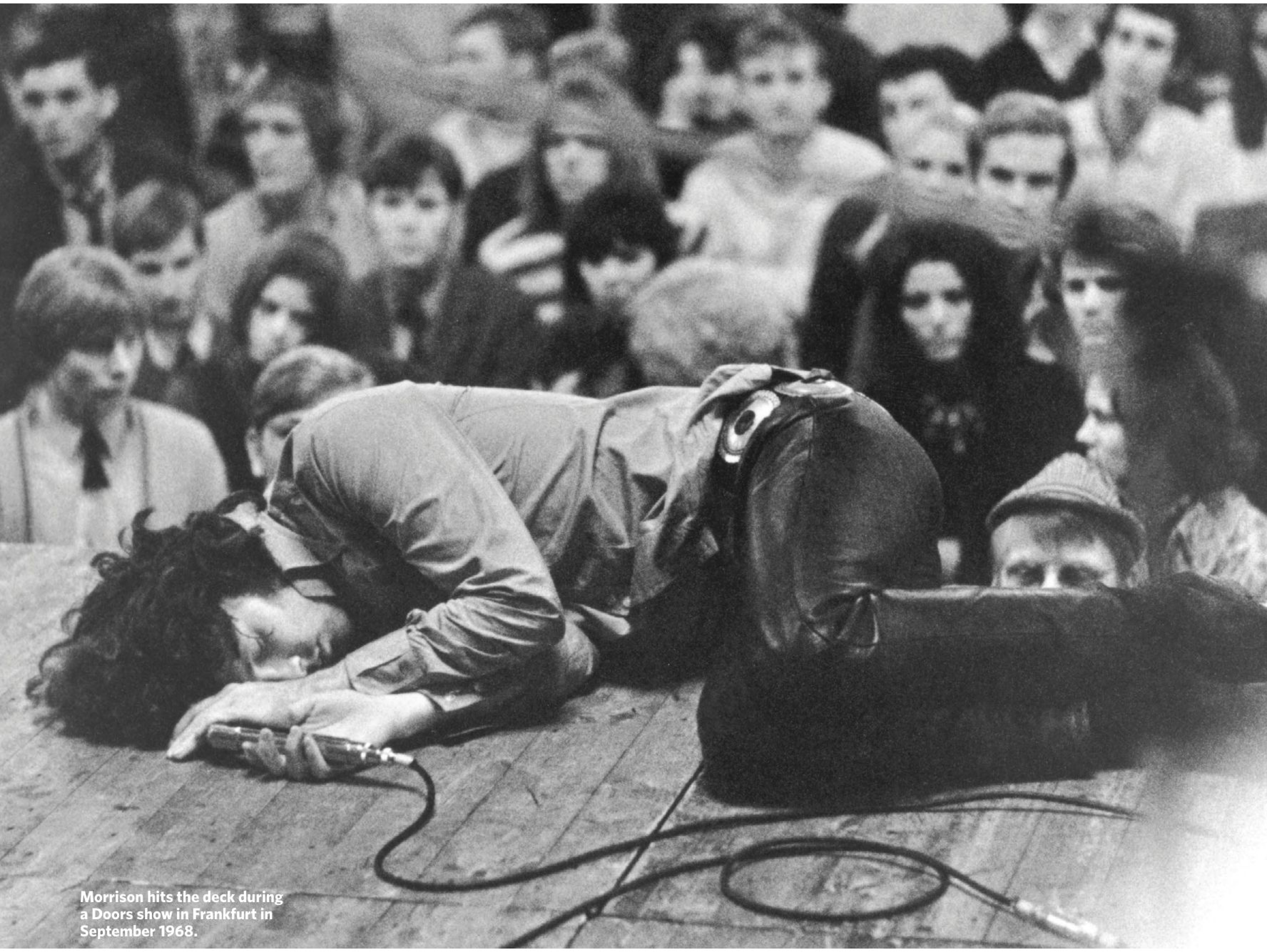

Morrison hits the deck during a Doors show in Frankfurt in September 1968.

York for their second residency at Ondine's. It was during this trip that the now famous 'young lion' shots of Morrison were taken by the distinguished New York photographer Joel Brodsky. He'd already done one session with The Doors on their previous visit to NY, a shot from which adorned the back cover of *The Doors*: a technically advanced for the time quadruple exposure combining portraits of the individual group members that would later be nominated for a Grammy. Now, though, he would take the most iconic shots of his – and The Doors' – career. "I never actually heard him listen to the music he shot,' said his son-in-law, Sid Holt, a former managing editor of *Rolling Stone*. "He didn't particularly like The Doors."

Maybe so, but it's Brodsky's shots – an extended series of black-and-white pictures of a shirtless Jim posing with a string of beads around his muscled neck, his hair a halo of waterfall curls, his face as expressionless as the moon, arms outstretched in mock crucifixion pose, now known as the 'Young Lion' shots – that remain to this day the defining image of Jim Morrison, and therefore The Doors.

CAN YOU PICTURE WHAT WILL BE?
THE DOORS

"With Jim, it wasn't always easy. It would have been a lot easier if he'd been just a *normal* genius."

Robby Krieger

As usual, Jim had been drinking throughout the day and was 'pretty loose' by the time Brodsky began suggesting poses. The 'American Poet' shot, as Brodsky called it, was one of the last to be taken. And while the singer's "equilibrium wasn't too terrific" he was "great to photograph because he had a very interesting look".

When, a week later, the *Village Voice* ran the iconic Christ-like shot of Jim, arms stretched in supplication, in the showpiece article by the staff writer Howard Smith, under the heading 'New Teen Idol', Brodsky found himself inundated with "something like ten thousand requests for the picture". "You know, Morrison never really looked that way again," he reflected, "and those pictures have become a big part of The Doors' legend. I think I got him at his peak."

The Doors was now selling upwards of 10,000 copies a week on the West Coast, even if it was still barely registering anywhere else outside New York.

Pamela Courson, who had lately started wearing a ring on her wedding finger and referring to herself as Mrs Morrison, now came to every show she could, increasingly bedevilled by the knowledge that each gig offered her 'husband' a thousand opportunities to leave the show with someone else. On this occasion she was accompanied by Tom Baker, a stage actor from New York who had recently worked with Norman Mailer on the short-lived Off-Broadway production of his novel *The Deer Park*.

Like Jim, Tom was a good-looking, fucked-up boy from a military family whose talent was only matched by his unquenchable thirst for booze, drugs and 'good times'. The next time The Doors left town, Pam began a very public affair with Baker – payback, perhaps, for Jim's own barely concealed

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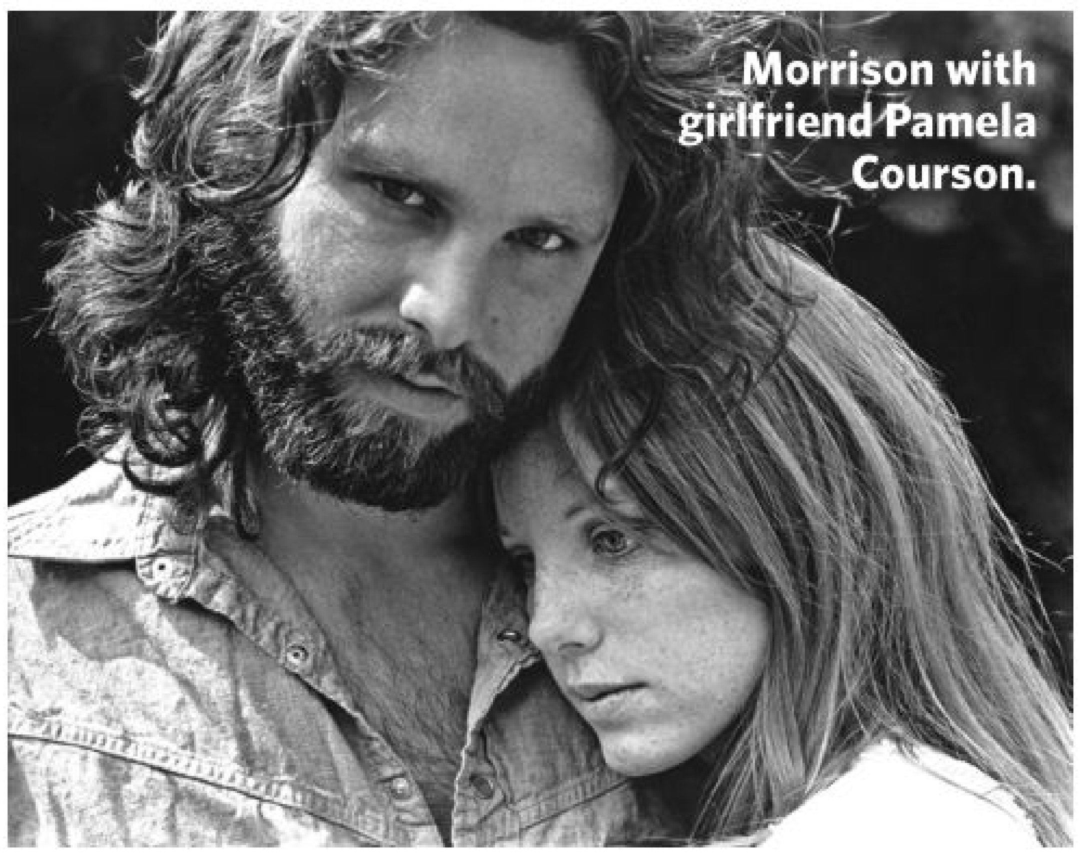
infidelities. Or just Pam proving that anything Jim could do, she could do better. As future Morrison biographer Jerry Hopkins observed, Pam was Jim's "mirror image with tits".

The following month The Doors were back for their third, and final, residency at Ondine's, three weeks of shows that would see them playing three sets a night, five nights a week. The quality of the shows differed each night, each set, each number sometimes, depending on the condition Jim was in. Livid with rage at Pam's affair with Tom Baker, it was this energy that helped fuel some of his most intense performances with The Doors.

The band was also reaching a new, dizzying peak, in a hurry to include new works-in-progress into the set such as *People Are Strange*, a new, more finessed version of *Moonlight Drive* and, especially, what looked to be a sequel to *The End*, a whale song of environmental despair called *When The Music's Over*. Like its witchy precursor, some nights it would stretch and contort to 10, 15 minutes, sometimes even longer; Jim improvising more poetry over the top, adding new lines, new verses, new worlds each time they performed it, the rafters of the tiny club's ceiling seeming to enclose his head in a wooden crown, the band hypnotised over their instruments like medieval monks in rapture at their illuminations.

With Elektra getting ready to release the new, AM radio-friendly, edited-down version of *Light My Fire* as their next single, the band were also expected to make the most of their off-time in New York too: more photo sessions, more interviews than ever before. And of course, for Jim at least, more drink, more drugs and more



Morrison with girlfriend Pamela Courson.

CAN YOU PICTURE WHAT WILL BE?
THE DOORS

"Self-destruction and creativity don't *have* to come in the same package."

John Densmore

women. Standing at the bar each night between sets, he'd throw back double shots of vodka and orange while gobbling up every pill, powder and potion the various hangers-on were only too eager to pass his way.

In his black leather suit, his tea-coloured hair falling in angelic ringlets about his, for once, cleanly shaven face, he looked exactly as he did in the recently published Joel Brodsky 'Young Lion' shots, nailed to the cross of his own doomed beauty.

But despite The Doors giving some of the most powerful performances of their short career, Jim Morrison's off-stage life was already going to hell. He may have still looked like an angel from some decadent rock heaven, but inside he was fighting just to keep his head above the dark waters he now found himself in, caught between his own idealised vision of himself as a hedonistic poet and artist, the latest, maybe greatest, guardian of rock's philosopher's stone, and the more realistic expectations of a record company, Elektra, who were about to enjoy the biggest record sales success of their existence with *Light My Fire*, soon to be the biggest hit of the biggest summer in rock. Ever.

Meanwhile, the rest of The Doors could only look on and wonder 'what if'. As John Densmore ruefully remarked when we spoke in 2012: "You know, self-destruction and creativity don't have to come in the same package. Picasso lived to be ninety-one. But in Jim they came together so I had to accept it. We all had to. That was the card we were dealt as a band." Or as Robby Krieger put it: "With Jim, it wasn't always easy. It was worth it because of the stuff that we got. But it would have been a lot easier if he'd been just a *normal* genius. You know?"

But no one else wanted Jim to be a "normal genius". They just wanted what they got: Jim Phoenix, ready to be shot down in flames.

It's the image – the fire fully lit – that would finally set The Doors on their way on their journey into night, and one that resonates still, half a century later.

Mick Wall's Love Becomes A Funeral Pyre: A Biography Of The Doors is available now as an Orion paperback

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The Troggs

★ Wild Thing

Chip Taylor talks about how his simple and sweaty little ditty propelled The Troggs into the spotlight and into the Top 10, and went on to become one of the most covered songs of all time.

Words:
Marc Shapiro
Photo:
Getty Images

The Beatles' *Yesterday* is far and away the most covered song on the planet. But a spirited case can be made for *Wild Thing* as very close behind it. The Troggs were the first to have a UK hit with a cover of it (No.2 in 1966) , but a long list of artists that includes Jimi Hendrix, Fancy, Sam Kinison, X, Prince, Warren Zevon and, most recently, Bruce Springsteen have put their spin on its simple chord progressions and sweaty lyrical sentiments. But the song's writer Chip Taylor (brother of actor Jon Voight) sees what many consider the ultimate distillation of pure, rock'n'roll heat as a more important step in musical history.

"I guess it is the most covered song on the planet," chuckles Taylor. "Particularly if you include all the kids who learned guitar by playing it." It's easy to see why so many aspiring rockers took to the song as their first lesson. Strummed in a bluesy rock A-major and using a simple chord progression, *Wild Thing* was that raunchy, goofy ode to unbridled lust that anybody could relate to and that almost anybody could play – all the things that have made *Wild Thing* perfect cover fodder for major stars and rank amateurs alike.

However Taylor insists that *Wild Thing* in execution and intent was serious business. "I treat all my songs seriously," he says. "There was an honesty to the song. Sure, when you break it down there's not a lot to it. But when I was writing it, I was treating it as the most serious thing in the universe." By 1965, Chip Taylor, who readily admits he was writing "sweaty kind of dumb things because I didn't know a lot of chords", had made a name for himself as an April Blackwood Music staff writer in the country vein, penning songs for the likes of Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and Chet Atkins. He was beginning to expand his horizon as a writer of R&B and rock'n'roll when he received a call from A&R man Gerry Granahan who was looking for a rock'n'roll song for his latest discovery, Jordan Christopher and The Wild Ones.

Taylor had a number of songs already written that would have fit the bill, but he was so flattered Granahan had sought him out that he immediately offered to write an original song for the band. There was one catch. It was 2pm when Granahan called, and he needed the song the next day. "So I laughed," recalls Taylor, "and told him: 'Let me see if I can write you something right now.'"

Taylor immediately picked up his guitar and began "chugging away". The simple chord progression "just erupted", and before he knew it the instrumental elements were complete. In short order, he had pieced together the first verse. But at that point he hit the proverbial wall.

"What I had felt really good, but now I didn't know what the hell to say," he remembers. "I didn't know what the hell I was going to do for that second verse. My brain had gotten too involved in it and I just didn't want to think about it any more." Faced with a 5pm demo session at the famed Dick Charles Recording Studio, Taylor decided to fully embrace the bluesman in him. He rang up his engineer, Ron Johnson, and told him to have his microphone all set up and to be ready for anything. Taylor arrived at the appointed hour, sat down on a stool in front of the mic and requested that Johnson turn down all the lights. "I had no idea where I was going with it," he recalls. "I just let it flow. It was all about emotion." Five minutes later *Wild Thing* concluded with those immortal lines: *'Wild thing I think I love you/But I wanna know for sure/So come on and hold me tight/You move me.'*

Taylor was thrilled with his new song, but a bit embarrassed that the good Catholic boy in him had been capable of such base feelings.

After The Wild Ones' version went nowhere, the demos made their way to England where the song came to the attention of producer Larry Page who was shepherding the fortunes of an up-and-coming group called The Troggs. Page originally wanted it to be the B-side to a cover of The Lovin' Spoonful's *Did You Ever Have To Make Up Your Mind,* but the band lobbied long and hard for *Wild Thing* as the A-side. Recorded in just 10 minutes, and released in May 1966, it took The Troggs to No.1 in the US, and in the UK hit No.2 and propelled the band into the pop spotlight. (The Troggs would go on to turn another Taylor song, *Anyway That You Want Me* into a Top 10 hit in January 1967.)

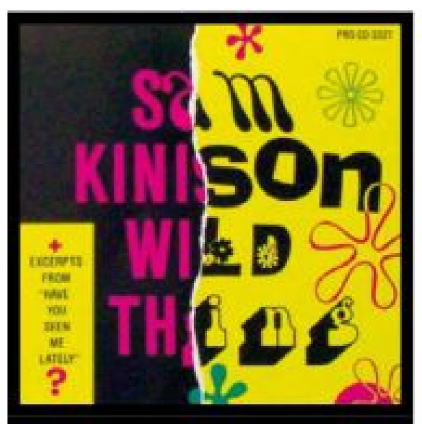
Taylor was thrilled at having his first major rock'n'roll hit, and as the years have gone by he has been delighted at the wide array of performers who have chosen to make it their own.

"I felt The Troggs captured the essence of the song," Taylor says of *Wild Thing*. "I loved what Hendrix did with it. Jimi took the song one step further with this really amazing, sweaty strum. The Senator Bobby version was a fun thing to do. I even thought the Sam Kinison version had a certain feel and energy to it. I liked what Prince and Warren Zevon did to it," he continues. "It's been great to watch over the years as people have taken it in so many different directions."

"I loved what Hendrix did with it. Jimi took the song one step further with this really amazing, sweaty strum."

Taylor is wary of citing dollars and cents in terms of royalties he's received from the song over the years, and loudly proclaims that what is going to happen tomorrow is of more interest then what happened yesterday. He does offer that his publishers got 50 per cent of the song. "But I gave 50 per cent of my royalties for *Wild Thing* to a great publisher and they have definitely worked their asses off for that 50 per cent."

He's remained in constant demand as a performer, and it is the rare show that does not include a raucous version of *Wild Thing*. He acknowledges that singing the song live does bring back memories. "I still have the same feeling that I had when I wrote it. It feels good. It feels sweaty."



SAM KINISON'S WILD THING

Not surprisingly, Sam Kinison took *Wild Thing* and turned it into a raunchy metal workout that incorporated Taylor's lyrics with a healthy dose of the comic's adults-only humour, sung in his trademark evangelical style. Typical of the new lyrical additions was "Everytime I kiss you I taste what other men had for lunch."

The comic's cover version, which appeared on Kinison's 1988 album, *Have You Seen Me Lately,* did not crack Billboard's Top 100, and only received sporadic airplay on the bravest of FM stations. But Kinison's lively take continues its notorious journey today, thanks to an all-star video that featured comic Rodney Dangerfield, Aerosmith's Steven Tyler and Joe Perry, Slash, Billy Idol, Steve Vai, Richie Sambora, Tommy Lee and a host of 80s hair-band icons.

The video remains a YouTube and internet favourite, and features Kinison performing a very nasty roll in the hay with the then hot model of the moment, Jessica Hahn.

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The Troggs: their cover "captured the essence" of his song, says Chip Taylor.

THE FACTS
RELEASE DATE
By The Troggs: May 1966
HIGHEST CHART POSITION
UK No.2, US No.1
PERSONNEL
Reg Presley
Vocals
Chris Britton
Guitar
Pete Staples
Bass
Ronnie Bond
Drums
WRITTEN BY
Chip Taylor
PRODUCER
Larry Page
LABEL
Fontana/Atco

Sharp-dressed men: (l to r) Ronnie Lane. Steve Marriott, Ian McLagan, Kenny Jones.

ALL PICTURES: GETTY

Totally gone

The Small Faces were at the forefront of British psychedelia in the late 60s with their career-peaking album *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*. Ian Fortnam asked Ian McLagan about psychedelia in the London summer time and lazy Sunday afternoons-ah.

In 1966 The Small Faces were the ultimate embodiment of the metropolitan mod ideal. Four diminutive Jack-the-lads perpetually decked out in razor-sharp threads fresh from Carnaby Street. Rail-thin, hyperactive, mischievous; it was blatantly obvious to every ticket on the street that you didn't get cheekbones like that from early nights and All-Bran. Mum-friendly pop stars or not, The Small Faces were clearly quaffing large on whatever chemical indulgences Swinging London swung their way.

To alleviate the boredom of a heavy provincial touring schedule, The Small Faces invariably took to the road with as many stimulants as were necessary to render rain-lashed Manchester club dates bearable: at first a little grass or hash; on occasion something a little speedier.

Then, shortly after Steve Marriott (guitar/vocals), Ronnie Lane (bass/vocals) and Ian McLagan (keyboards/vocals) moved into a shared Westminster apartment, a new drug entered their orbit that expanded their artistic remit almost beyond all recognition: LSD.

"We took our first trip in Westmoreland Terrace in early '66," remembers Ian McLagan. "And almost immediately started experimenting, using Chinese instruments and all sorts of sounds, to try and recreate a trip."

By the following year the band's singles output painted them as full-blown, unashamed drug evangelists. Though interestingly, July '67's lyrically blatant *Here Comes The Nice* concerned scoring speed rather than acid; yet another weapon in the Faces' extensive pharmaceutical armoury.

"It was weird that they allowed *Here Comes The Nice* to come out at all," smiles McLagan. "We were dabbling in all kinds of chemicals and Methedrine was one of them. We were wrong to have written about a speed dealer. They weren't the nicest people. The guy you bought your hash from was usually just a head, but a speed dealer – like a coke or heroin dealer – was only interested in getting your money. It was quite different. They weren't your friends."

Just two months down the line from *Here Comes The Nice*, The Small Faces delivered one of the Summer Of Love's defining statements, a psychedelically-inclined slice of quintessentially English whimsicality, characterised by a phasing effect courtesy of Olympic Studios engineer George Chkiantz. With a melody Marriott lifted straight from the hymn *God Be In My Head*, it concerned a nettle-swathed, rail-side bombsite in Ilford called *Itchycoo Park*.

Having delivered the East End *Good Vibrations*, The Small Faces prepared to record the Cockney *Sgt. Pepper*. But first there was the small matter of an Australian package tour (alongside The Who and Paul Jones) to take care of. "[The Australian press] gave me hell from the very beginning, because I'd just been busted," Mac continues, "I was on my way to Athens for a holiday but never got further than Heathrow. As I was showing my passport they smelt the hash on me, searched and busted me. As soon as we landed in Australia we had a press conference, so we're all lined up in front of the television cameras and the first guy goes: 'Steve Marriott, Ronnie Lane, Kenney Jones, Ian McLagan… you're the drug addict right?'"

Controversy continued to plague the tour to its conclusion. "On our way to New Zealand we had to stop off in Sydney. You couldn't drink on internal flights back then, but one of Paul Jones' Australian backing band passed a bottle around and the police were called. We weren't even drinking but they arrested and held us in the first-class lounge where a waitress came straight up to us and said: 'What would you like to drink?' So we drank. The police arrested us as soon as we arrived in New Zealand, but we ended up having a great time. Steve had his 21st birthday party; Keith [Moon] wrecked his room; it was business as usual."

Some of the material eventually included on their seminal *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake* was already in the can by this point, but not enough for an entire album. So in the spring of '68 The Small Faces hired cabin cruisers and took to the River Thames to write some more. "We found a camaraderie we hadn't had before; I was even allowed to be involved in the writing. *Long Agos And Worlds Apart* was only my second song. It was all about being high. My first song was *Up The Wooden Hills To Bedfordshire* and that was all about… being high. I think I only had two modes at the time, one was being high and being awake, and the other was being high and being asleep."

So what, other than the very liberal usage of a cocktail of psychoactive substances, was driving this period of unprecedented creativity? According to McLagan, not the influence of the then blossoming American West Coast psych scene, that's for sure.

"Most of the music that came out of San Francisco at that time gave me a bad trip," asserts McLagan. "I thought it was wet; hopeless frankly. It seemed like they'd forgotten the groove, the soul. It was totally boring; we had nothing in common with those guys apart from the drugs."

> **"Most of the psychedelic music that came out of San Francisco gave me a bad trip." – Ian McLagan**

There's no escaping the fact that *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake* defines a uniquely Small Faces brand of psychedelia. Above all, it's very mod, and very English. The cover (a round tobacco tin mock-up), lyrical imagery and subject matter are all symptomatic of the Edwardian nostalgia so prevalent in London as mod went psychedelic. While iconic boutique Granny Takes A Trip dressed the era, *Ogdens'*… provided its soundtrack: a seamless collage of hallucinogenic blues shouting, pop-art ingenuity, agrarian folk whimsy and music hall chirpiness.

"Coming from the East End the other three had more of a link to the music hall than me," admits Hounslow-born McLagan, "I'd seen Max Miller, The Crazy Gang when I was a kid, but Steve was a throwback. Apart from being a great blues and soul singer, he was a natural music-hall entertainer and that side was always bursting out of him. It's a particularly English thing: The Kinks had it, The Who had it. Steve couldn't help himself, he always had that sense of humour, while we thought we were all blues men, we were Max Miller wearing denim."

The influence of the music hall on Marriott's work was never more obvious than on *Ogdens'*… most celebrated track, *Lazy Sunday*: "Lyrically, that was all about Steve's problems with his landladies, landlords and neighbours, which were ongoing," Mac reveals, "He really was the worst neighbour, with dog shit everywhere and music all hours of the night at full volume. And musically, well, while we were on the Australian tour Bob Pridden, The Who's sound guy – who was a very funny and humorous chap – had this little dance he'd do when we were hanging out that he'd accompany with this little 'rootdedootdedoo' tune, which ended up being part of *Lazy Sunday*."

Making a feature of one's cockney accent simply wasn't done in '68. Every vocalist in the UK seemed to have been in denial of their natural burr since the initial importation of rock'n'roll from America in the mid-50s, with a mid-Atlantic twang uniformly adopted by all. But Marriott (formerly the 13-year old Artful Dodger in the West End production of Lionel Bart's *Oliver!*) not only reclaimed his linguistic heritage on *Lazy Sunday*. His rollicking performance on *Rene* – the bawdy tale of a dockside prostitute – was so strident as to be almost mockney. Here's the song and performance Damon Albarn plundered for Blur's career-reanimating *Sunday Sunday* single. How ironic is it that 1995's Britpop crown was contested so fiercely by a pair of apparently diametrically opposed bands who were so clearly basing their careers on two different incarnations of the same core band: Blur as The Small Faces and Oasis as the band that would later grow out of them: The Faces.

"I like the fact that people have listened to us and taken something from us," says Mac, "I've heard some of Blur's stuff and really like it, and I like Oasis, but our biggest champion is Paul Weller. Our biggest champions back then were probably Rod Stewart and Ronnie Wood. They told us that *Ogdens'*… kept them going on their American tours with Jeff Beck. Rod and Woody's sense of humour is just as mad and rooted in vaudeville as ours."

"We were recording for the next record and things were falling apart." – Ian McLagan

Further compounding *Ogdens'*… matters was the other half of the Marriott/Lane songwriting partnership: "Ronnie, on the other hand, was more of a folkie," McLagan continues, "*Song Of A Baker, The Hungry Intruder, Mad John*; they all came from him more than Steve. He was already floating in the direction of the folkie he eventually proved to be."

While *Ogdens'*… first side was only distinctive for the excellence of its material, the album's entire second side was given over to a six-part song cycle, mostly written on the Thames, which told the tale of Happiness Stan's search for the other half of the moon. Hardly grand opera, but in formative concept album terms, this missing link between The Who's *A Quick One While He's Away* and *Tommy* predated The Pretty Things' *S.F. Sorrow* by six months.

"It was Ronnie's basic idea," says Mac. "The story was very thin but we soon made the songs fit. *A Quick One* was the light: Pete [Townshend's] little rock opera convinced us that it could be done, so we did one of our own and Pete loved it."

While the deeply psychedelicised story of Happiness Stan (who lived inside a rainbow in a small Victorian charabanc, by all accounts) was obviously pretty straightforward. After all, what could possibly be confusing about a saga made up of brief musical vignettes concerning grateful flies that band together to form makeshift aircraft, mad tramps, and that concludes with the philosophical assertion that: *'Life is just a bowl of All-Bran, you wake up every morning and it's there'*? It was felt that – for the benefit of the slightly less medicated – the services of a clarifying narrator should be engaged. With Marriott's first choice for the role, ex-Goon Spike Milligan, unavailable 'Professor' Stanley Unwin, an unlikely television star of the day (famously fluent in his own particular brand of gibberish known as Unwinese) got the job. He turned out to be an inspired choice.

"I don't know who suggested Stanley, but boy, what a brilliant stroke," says Mac. "He came down the studio and we were thrilled to meet him. He'd just hang around while we were going about our business,

Totally Gone: but Ian McLagan (far left) insists thet *Ogdens'*... was not a psychedelic album.

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recording and chatting, and make notes. He picked up on the way we spoke – 'Cool, man' and all that – and although it was like a whole new language to him, he totally got it. We pointed out what we needed in the way of links and after a while he came back and tried a few things. [producer] Glyn Johns must have trimmed it down a bit because he couldn't half rabbit on, but he was brilliant."

Aside from the often dizzying mix of musical styles and sound effects etched into its grooves, *Ogdens'*… was housed in a perfectly circular sleeve based on a vintage 'baccy tin, that was just right for clamping between your knees and rolling a recreational doobie on. The title, meanwhile, came as a by-product of researching the artwork.

"Ogdens' tobacco very kindly sent over all these scrapbooks with original labels pasted in," remembers Mac, "We browsed through them and as soon as Steve saw this rectangular label for Ogdens' Nut Brown Flake he went: 'There it is: *Nut Gone Flake*, perfect.' Someone copied and adjusted it into a round tin by hand and my pals from art school – Nick Tweddell and Pete Brown – painted the wonderful psychedelic collages inside with all the butterflies."

Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake topped the UK charts for six weeks in the summer of '68, with *Lazy Sunday* stalled at No.2 in the singles charts behind Louis Armstrong's *Wonderful World*. Yet despite outward appearances, all wasn't wonderful in the world of The Small Faces. Firstly, the band weren't pleased that Immediate had released *Lazy Sunday* as a single without their consent. Marriott considered it little more than a novelty song, and certainly not representative of *Ogdens'*… as a whole. Secondly, while there was pressure on the band to play live, much of *Ogdens'*… and their more recent singles (*Itchycoo Park, Tin Soldier*) were almost impossible to replicate outside of the studio. In February '69, just a month after The Small Faces' live US debut, Steve Marriott quit the band.

"We were recording for the next record and things were falling apart bit by bit. Then he left," says Mac. "It's a shame because I think we could have made a better album than *Ogdens'*… We were well on the way to doing it. He and Ronnie were writing beautifully, but we'll never know."

So was the Happiness Stan concept a flash in the pan, a passing flirtation with the rock opera format, or perhaps the ex-Artful Dodger had ambitions to branch into musical theatre?

"If The Small Faces had stayed together I think that we probably would have done a whole concept album," opines Mac. "I don't think it's ever been done properly. *Tommy* is a bit (snores)… long. I know (ex-Small Faces drummer) Kenney (Jones) is keen to animate *Ogdens'*…, but it needs to be developed and it would be great if someone could write some more songs. I'd be keen to look at developing the second side of the *Ogdens'*… album into a proper show; a West End or Broadway thing, or maybe a movie."

Ultimately, though generally accepted to be a high watermark of the English end of the genre, is *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake* actually psychedelic?

"No," Mac states matter-of-factly. "We were over that; we weren't taking acid when we were making it; you couldn't get decent acid at that point. The age of acid was very short-lived. It was like the mod thing: mod was two years, max. The clothes weren't there after a while because the fashion industry caught on and killed it with cheap, crappy imitations.

Pop idle: Steve Marriott considered *Lazy Sunday* to be little more than a novelty song.

"Psychedelia was here and gone. For me personally it was that one big night we had in Westmoreland Terrace where I spent five hours or so drawing self portraits on the carpet and having the most wonderful trip. I was thinking: 'Great, my whole life has changed.' Then I went to sleep, woke up the next morning, felt a bit odd and then just went back to being ordinary again."

So while much of *Ogdens'*… creation was informed by the band's experiences of LSD, it was very much forged in the afterglow of The Small Faces' acid experimentation. In fact, at this point the whole notion of a cohesive psychedelic rock scene was little more than a journalistic contrivance to link all the bands together. It was a convenient, generic pigeonhole in which ingenious, progressive music of a certain vintage can be placed.

"The psychedelic scene was about as united as the punk scene," says Mac. "Punk wasn't just about one thing and neither was psychedelia. I was always into the blues, rock'n'roll, soul and r'n'b, acid didn't change that, it was more like an excursion; a left turn before going back on track, and once we'd got over the initial rosy glow of acid it was back to soul music for us, because that's what we did."

So, in retrospect, did acid's influence enable The Small Faces' to create their defining moment in *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*?

"*Ogdens'*… was pretty good, it was adventurous, but we could have done a lot better." Mac concludes, "Acid did change my life temporarily, but as far as the music went, acid was the worst thing that could have happened; because everyone was trying to recreate a trip, which is like trying to catch a cloud."

Hailed as the greatest live album of all time, **The Who**'s *Live At Leeds* is more than that: it's an important snapshot of rock's first wave before it graduated out of the clubs and into the stadiums. Back in 2010, **Pete Townshend** and **Roger Daltrey** spoke exclusively to *Classic Rock* about the days of Maximum R&B and why "The Who were *always* a rock band".

Words: **Mick Farren**

The Marquee club, the winter of early 1965. A pair of art schoolmates drag me down to see a group they claim are "fucking amazing". The scene: a seething mass of youthful, vibrating, pill-head, moddy-geezer humanity, in the grip of howling electric fury, scrum-pushing to be nearer the focal epicentre that was the Marquee's low stage. On stage Pete Townshend has physically dragged around his twin Marshall stacks so they're facing each other, and is holding a doomed Rickenbacker 330 in the space between them like a strangled chicken – although no chicken ever produced the terminal howl of uncontrolled, ear-bleeding feedback that is screaming from the unfortunate guitar. Behind him Keith Moon is systematically decimating his drums, Roger Daltrey is dodging debris, while John Entwistle remains motionless, the unshakable anchor of this finale of mayhem. Roadies ruthlessly dive into the crowd to retrieve fragments of equipment, and mercilessly smack any fan who tries to make off with them as souvenirs.

This was the moment when I became an unashamed Who fan. For the next 45 years, The Who and I would grow up together, and I'd watch them progress from small clubs all the way to Shea Stadium.

"We were bursting out of those little clubs like a rose bud bursting in the spring," Daltrey says today. "Those clubs couldn't contain us any more, the energy was ridiculous. It would have exploded."

The only way was up – ultimately taking their music to ballparks, arenas and superdomes, via Woodstock and the Isle of Wight Festival, and changing their songs by necessity. ("Stadium rock was a crock of shit," says Townshend now.)

But before all that was *Live At Leeds*…

For an amazing 23 weeks starting in late November 1964 and extending well into the following year, The Who's Tuesday night residency at the Marquee club's comparatively new premises at 90 Wardour Street became a London rock'n'roll institution and ultimately a legend. Although the early nights were sparsely attended, these weekly events rapidly expanded to the point where the queue on Wardour Street – that began to form even before the pubs opened – became a show in itself, with the sharpest of alpha-mods strutting their mohair, their sunglasses and their pork pie hats, all competing with the crew known as The 100 Faces, the recognised hardcore in-crowd who had followed the band from the Goldhawk Club in Shepherd's Bush. With typical mod paradox all of the immaculate number waiting to get in were well aware that they would be reduced to dishevelled dervishes before the night was over.

When the box office opened the mods would pay five bob a head not only to see spectacular music, but also to be a part of what they knew instinctively was a blossoming cultural ritual, closely related to the larger mod/rocker seaside-style wars that were making headlines and the TV news. In central London, The Who were becoming an integral part of being a mod, along with the Lambretta, the parka, the Levi's, the Keds, the Fred Perry and the Raybans. In the meantime, other street business was being conducted as rapid sleight-of-hand exchanged cash for blue and yellow pills – the Dexadrine and the Drynamil – that would fuel the stammering, guitar smashing, *My Generation* apocalypse that was being promoted as 'Maximum R&B.'

Maximum R&B was, beyond doubt, one of the most successful promo concepts and marketing campaigns in rock history. Designer Brian Pikes's starkly famous black-and-white poster, with Townshend in windmill pose, and the 'O' in Who turned into a male gender symbol, seemed to be plastered all over every building site and boarded-up shop front in West London. The Who's management – Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp – where determined that the band should be promoted as the focal part of mod subculture. The idea wasn't entirely original. Peter Meaden, a hustling freelance publicist who had previously worked for The Rolling Stones, had tried the same thing while Townshend and co. had still been the High Numbers. His concept, as told to journalist Barbara Charone, was "getting a group together that would be the focus, the entertainers for the mods, a group that would be the same people on the stage as the guys in the audience".

Meaden, and the band's earlier manager Helmut Gorden, failed to pull off the first attempt, but Lambert and Stamp were determined not to fail. Accordingly, they freely plundered the popular culture of the early 1960s. The ideas behind Townshend's union jacket and Keith Moon's target T-shirt came from pop artists like Peter Blake and Jasper Johns. Bob Dylan was proving there was more to a rock song than just love stories and sexual tension. Townshend's guitar smashing, although born of a simple accident at the Railway Hotel in Harrow, had avant-garde roots in the work of Gustav Metzger and the Auto-Destructive Art movement. Lambert and Stamp even foreshadowed modern under-the-radar marketing, with ticket discounts and give-aways to the trendsetters of The 100 Faces.

RAY STEVENSON/REX FEATURES

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"THE GUITAR IS NOT LOUD ENOUGH!"

"'Ave it!" Pete Townshend totals another speaker during The Who's 60s early years.

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The way in which they initially sold The Who as the ultimate London mod band – straight outta Shepherd's Bush – just as though they were a commercial product, was also a bizarre confirmation of Marshall McLuhan's famous maxim that the medium was the massage. Mods were simultaneously the cutting edge and a frenetic speed-freak parody of mid-20th century disposable consumer society. In the same way, The Who were both celebrating and attacking the hire-purchase ethic of the 1960s – a theme that would hit its high point on the cover of *The Who Sell Out*, with its bathtub of baked beans and giant stick deodorant. But the irony also wasn't lost, especially on Townshend, that none of the band had ever exactly been hardcore mods: "The Who in the early years weren't really mods. I was an art student. Roger always calls himself a rocker. Keith was quite a mod-looking kid by today's definition of the word. But John Entwistle was very kind of parochial in the way that he dressed. So we weren't mods but our audience were."

And when The Who were struggling for their initial lift-off, it was all about the audience, as Townshend explained in a 1971 interview: "What we learned quite early on is what was really important to early British pop that we produced – and we were distinct from almost everybody else in this respect – is that it had to reflect exactly what the audience wanted us to say." He was also aware that the band's identification with the mods went deeper than just a commercial strategy. "It was a great show of solidarity and you felt that you belonged to something. This was when I first became aware of the force of a reflection of what was going on in the streets. When we were on stage, we reflected the mood of the kids and caught their frustration and aggression."

Talk at the time was of a projected Live At The Marquee album from The Who. This would have been a fairly unique departure. In the early 60s, live albums were for jazz musicians. Georgie Fame and The Blue Flames' *Live At The Flamingo* was about the only live rock album from that era. The need for rockers to release live albums didn't really get under way until the 1966 bootlegs of Bob Dylan And The Hawks at the Royal Albert Hall set an outlaw precedent. Some stories claimed that a number of shows during The Who's Marquee residency were recorded but then the project was shelved.

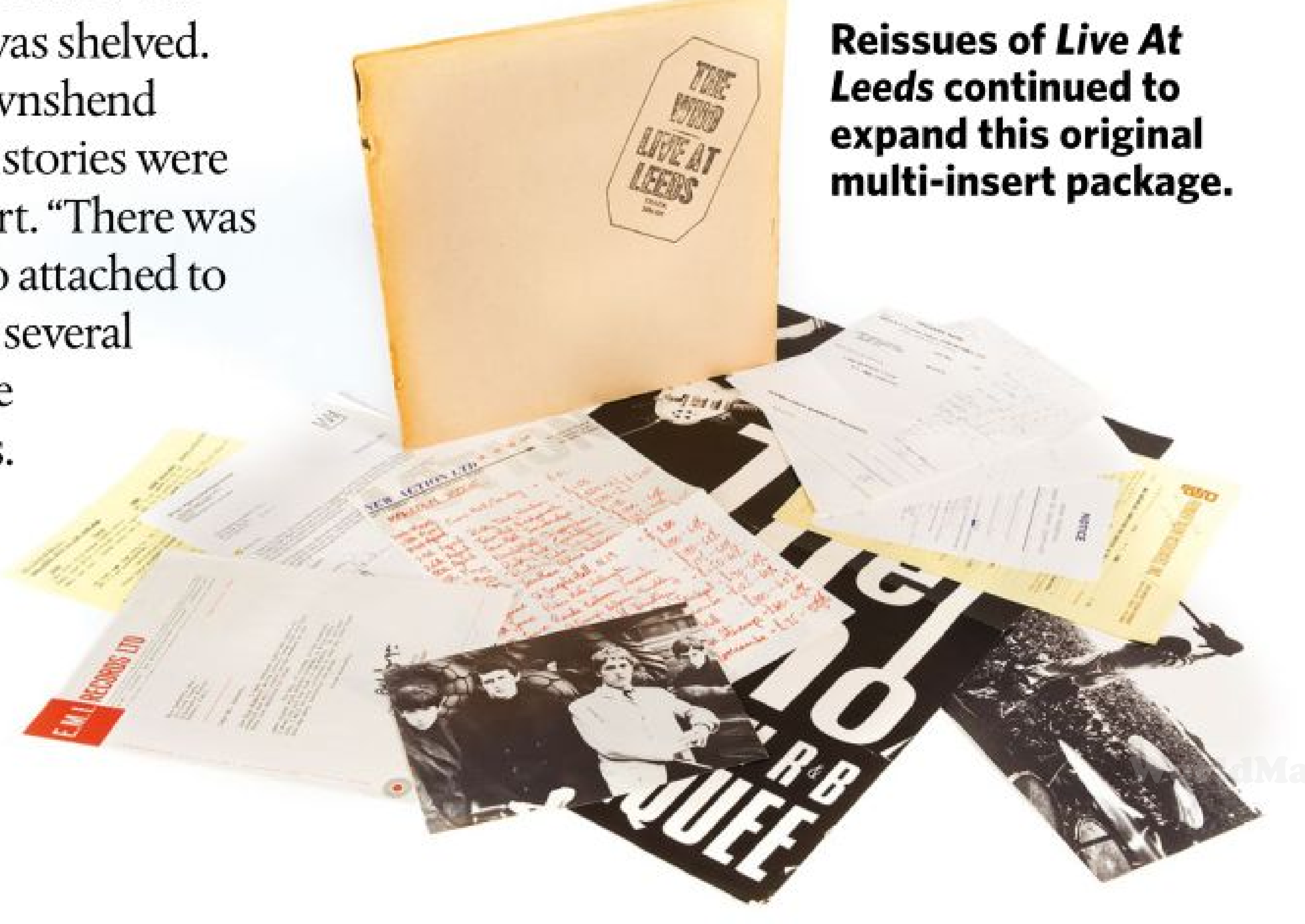
Today, Pete Townshend confirms that the stories were true, at least in part. "There was a recording studio attached to the Marquee, and several of our shows were recorded," he says. "Sadly the masters were lost in a dispute between the engineer, and the National Jazz Federation who owned the club. A few were found but only those associated with film footage." And so fans would have to wait almost half a decade and through a considerable process of musical evolution before a live performance by The Who would be preserved on record with the first release of *Live At Leeds* in May 1970.

When *Live At Leeds* first appeared, the initial surprise was the packaging. The plain manila folder with the simple 'The Who Live At Leeds' seemingly inked by a rubber stamp looked like a bootleg. When you opened it up there were two pockets. One contained the vinyl record, like a test-pressing in a paper sleeve, the other held facsimiles of assorted Who memorabilia from the band's highly chequered past, including Townshend's hand-typed lyrics to the song *My Generation*, a receipt for smoke bombs, disastrous band accounts, a rejection letter from EMI, the contract for Woodstock, and the Maximum R&B poster. Coming in the wake of *Tommy*, with its lavish triptych cover by Mike McInnerney that was part psychedelic and part M. C. Escher, seemed to indicate that The Who's sense of humour was asserting itself, and also their love/hate relationship with 20th-century consumerism.

"IT WAS OUR PLAYING PEAK, THAT CAME OUT OF PLAYING *TOMMY* IN ITS ENTIRETY ON STAGE – OR ALMOST IN ITS ENTIRETY. IT GAVE US A DYNAMIC THAT HAS STAYED WITH US EVER SINCE."
ROGER DALTREY

The next surprise was the record itself. Its original form consisted of just six tracks, three of which were covers – Johnny Kidd's *Shakin' All Over*, Eddie Cochran's *Summertime Blues* and Mose Allison's *Young Man Blues* – along with *Substitute*, *My Generation* and *Magic Bus*. This is not to say that *Live At Leeds* exactly short-changed the punters in 1970; *My Generation* is a 16-minute medley with snatches of *See Me, Feel Me*, *Listening To You*, *Underture*, *Naked Eye*, and *The Seeker*, while *Magic Bus* runs for a riotous seven-and-a-half minutes.

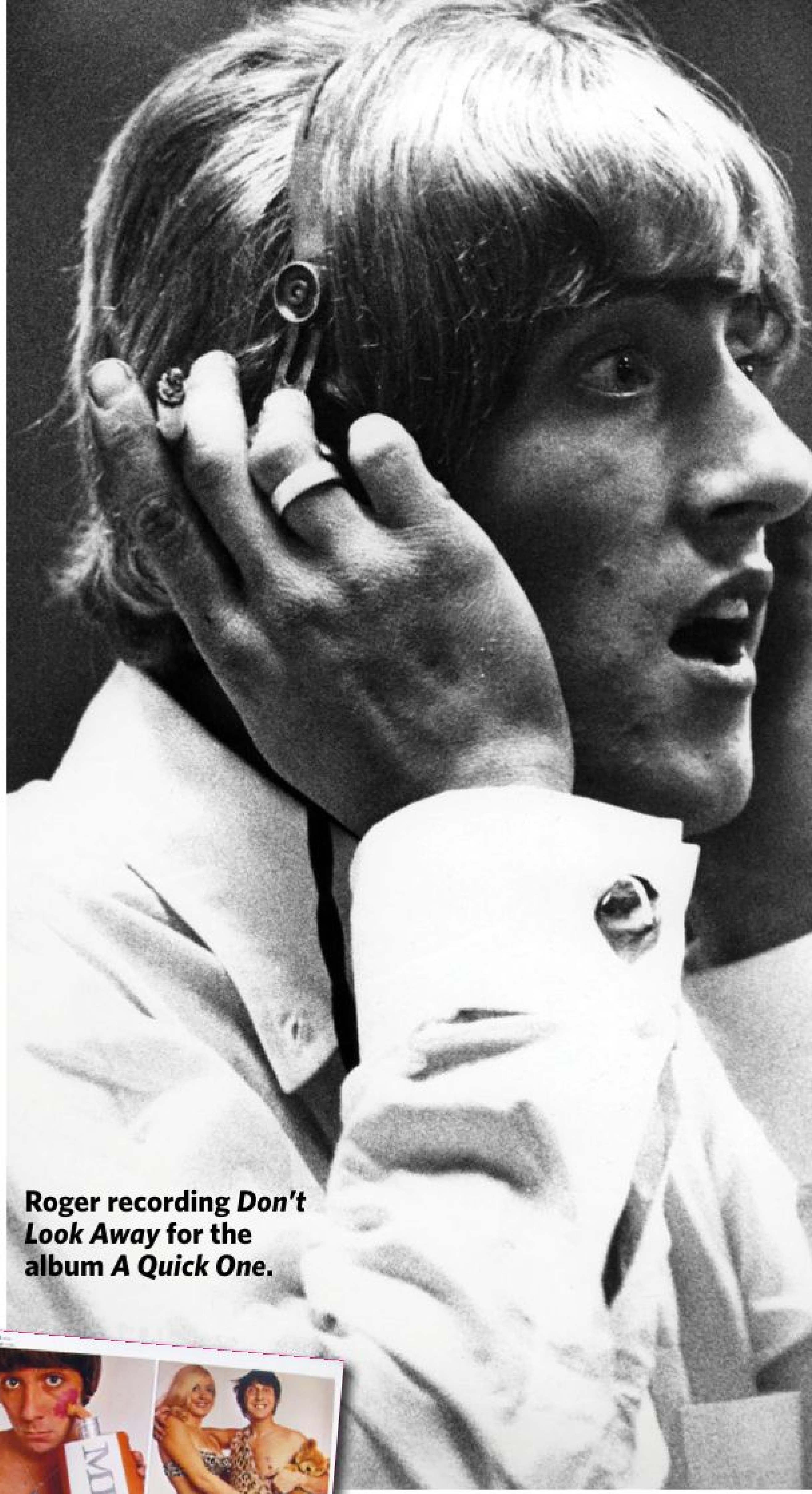
The story at the time was that, after the release of *Tommy* in mid-1969, The Who went on an extended world tour to promote the rock opera with the full intention of coming back with enough material for a live album. Back in England, however, the idea of wading through more than 80 hours of live recordings and selecting the best was just too daunting. Instead, they would go for broke and record just two shows, one at Leeds University and one at Hull City Hall, both in the same weekend of February 14 (Valentine's Day), 1970, and the tour tapes would be physically burned to prevent bootlegging. This seems like a triumph of either demented confidence or shit-or-bust courage.



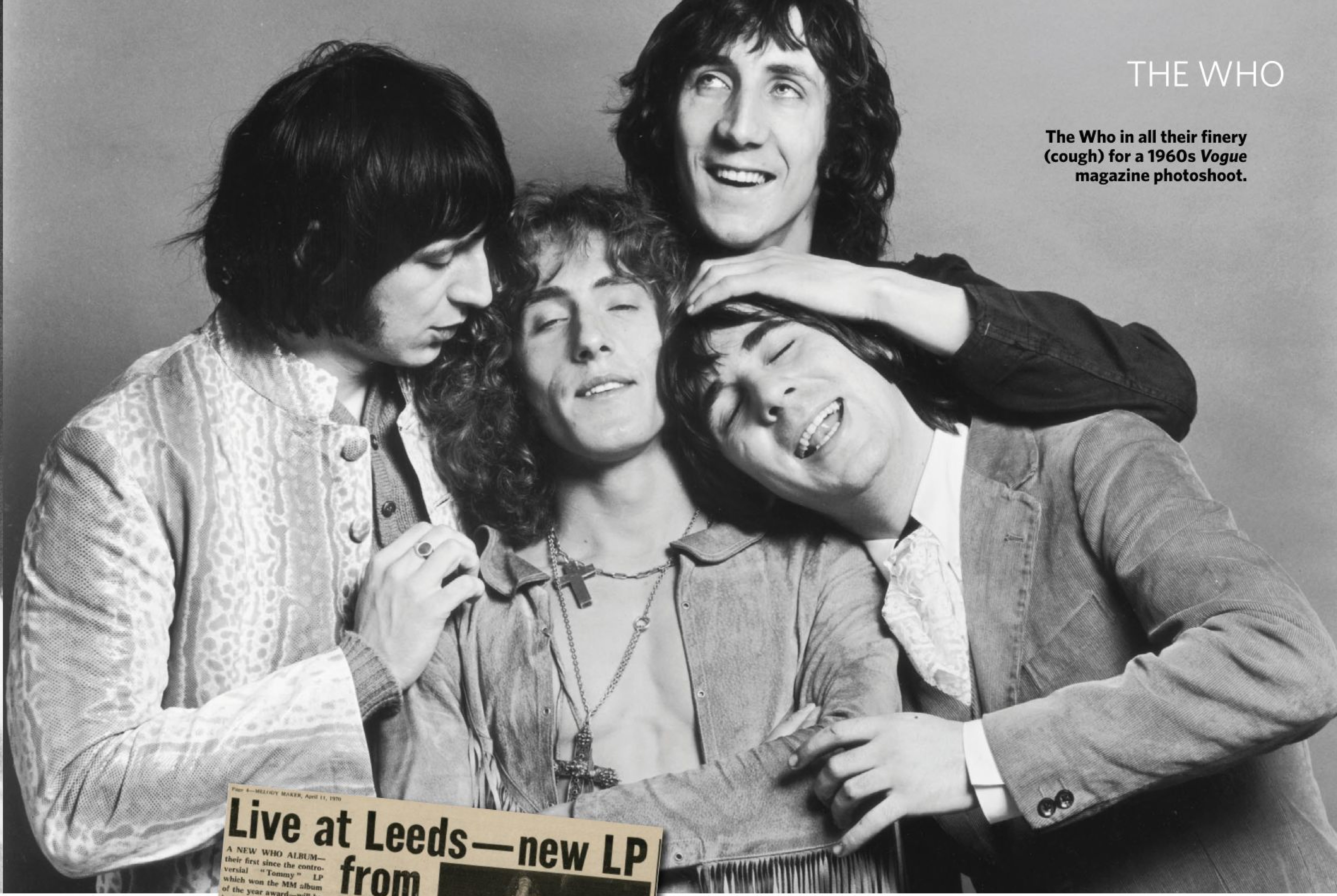
Reissues of *Live At Leeds* continued to expand this original multi-insert package.

"I wish this were true," says Townshend. "In fact our sound man, Bob Pridden, did wade through all the tapes. It took about three weeks and we were close to a delivery deadline. A few of the stereo tapes I listened to were great. It was hard to pick one that rose above the rest. The standard was good, and very consistent. So I asked Bob to do the listening. When he'd finished I asked him if any particular show stood out. He said they were all good. I then asked him if I could see his notes. He hadn't made any. The only way we could have made a decision was with a tail pinned on the donkey. In frustration – and I was pretty angry too, I think – I told him to burn the lot to avoid bootlegging, and hire an eight-track rig for the forthcoming weekend of shows in Hull and Leeds and I would mix it at home; I had an eight-track machine there. He swears he burned all the tapes, but he may have kept a few. I hope so! I mixed *Live At Leeds* in my tiny home studio where I had recorded all my demos thus far, Thunderclap Newman and some stuff with the Small Faces. What distinguishes it from most other Who mixes is that the electric guitar is very loud. Even on the new Hull mixes the guitar is mixed a shade too low for my taste."

Even if the truth is more hit-and-miss than legend, one thing is clear: by the time the band had reached the crucial Valentine's Day weekend they had hit an unstoppably solid groove, and a level of musical integration that was unequalled at the time, plus a driving need to preserve and


Roger recording *Don't Look Away* for the album *A Quick One*.

DALTREY: DAVID MONTGOMERY/REX FEATURES



The Who in all their finery (cough) for a 1960s *Vogue* magazine photoshoot.

GETTY

document a solid sample of these performances, something that Townshend confirms and credits mainly to Keith Moon. "I knew we had hit a roll. This mainly depended on Moon, of course. He was at the apex of balance between his drug use and youthful good health. Five years later he would start to slide. Moon as a musician was a great listener, and followed what John and I played. Roger feels, looking back, that Moon followed what he did vocally as well. So Moon was everywhere in these times, but playing with great affection. We also all seemed to have boundless energy."

Page 4—MELODY MAKER, April 11, 1970

Live at Leeds—new LP from the Who

A NEW WHO ALBUM—their first since the controversial "Tommy" LP which won the MM album of the year award—will be issued on May 1.

And this time each copy of the album will be different—insofar as it will be rubber-stamped with the title "The Who Live At Leeds" by scores of different people. Among them Who members Pete Townshend, Keith Moon, Roger Daltrey and John Entwistle.

"We are getting everyone to help with the stamping," a Track Records spokesman told the MM this week. "Among them visitors to his office."

Sleeve

The sleeve of the album will also include cuttings on the Who depicting stories about their early activities. There will also be a reproduction of a letter from EMI turning the group down. A date sheet will also show how they once played gigs for £10 a week. The sleeve is designed to look like a plain cardboard file on the Who.

The tracks, all recorded "live" at a performance at Leeds some three months ago, feature (Side 1) "Young Man Blues," "Substitute," "Summertime Blues," and "Shakin' All

THE WHO

PHASE TWO wish to announce that THE WHO will now appear in their two-hour non-stop Pop Opera, featuring Tommy, at Hull City Hall on Monday, February 16th, 7.30 p.m. NOT FEBRUARY 3rd, due only to an extension of their tour of Germany.

Some tickets are still on sale at Stardisc, South Street. Tel. 27888. Price 10/-, 15/-, 17/6, £1, 25/-, 30/-.

All tickets dated February 3rd will, of course, be valid.

STUDENT

Why so many play live at Leeds

THIS WEEK'S DATES

From top: news of *Tommy* is announced in *Melody Maker*; an ad for a date change for a Hull City Hall gig; what's so good about Leeds?

Roger Daltrey agrees that the band were on a decisive roll by the time the Leeds and Hull shows were recorded. "It was our playing peak, that came out of playing *Tommy* in its entirety on stage – or almost in its entirety," he says. "Talk about a sixteen-round boxing match. It gave us a dynamic that has stayed us with us ever since, and once you first discover that dynamic between musicians it becomes incredibly exciting and experimental. Every time someone throws something at a wall it sticks, it develops instantly. It's that wonderful thing. New things were happening at just about every gig."

The original intention was to focus on the show at Hull City Hall as the ultimate live recording, and use Leeds as both a warm-up and a back-up, in case the Hull recording encountered problems. And, needless to say, problems were encountered. In fact it seemed as though John Entwistle's bass was entirely missing from the Hull recording, although this impression may have been a result of Townshend's own impatience. "I didn't even listen to Hull all the way through," he says. "The first few songs had no bass. So I didn't even know the bass had been recorded on some songs. I just moved straight on to Leeds and mixed it. The Leeds night was covered in clicks, and most of them I literally cut out of the master tape with a razor blade. A lot of them were so bad I couldn't fix them. It's easier today with computers."

Almost everyone who was present remembers Hull as being the better of the two shows, with the City Hall offering warmer acoustics. Roger Daltrey recalls: "Hull was a better gig than Leeds. I remember it like it was yesterday, although in retrospect 'Live At Hull' doesn't really trip off the tongue." ['To Hull And Back'?] And Pete agrees. "It was a better performance from me – no bum notes. I was stone-cold sober, I think. At Leeds I had a drink or two."

In the years that followed, the *Live At Leeds* package grew and expanded from the original. In 1985 it came out on CD in its original form, 10 years later it was remixed as a special CD reissue with a whole bunch more songs – *Heaven And Hell, I Can't Explain, Fortune Teller, Tattoo, Happy Jack, I'm A Boy* and *A Quick One, While He's Away* – plus song introductions and other on-stage chat not included on the original.

The official story is that, in 1985, fresh vocal overdubs were added by Daltrey, Townshend and Entwistle to correct glitches on the original tapes or in the performances. Roger bristles, like a man accused of cheating, at the suggestion he studio-fixed any of the lead vocals: "The lead vocals are untouched. There are overdubs on the backing vocals, but not the lead vocals. I don't believe in that. For me it's all about the moment, it's all about the night. A bum note and a bead of sweat are better than a nice-sounding CD. It's like a painter. I look on our body of work like paintings. That's why I don't like to retouch them."

In 2001, *Live At Leeds* was released as a Universal Deluxe Edition. This time a second CD was added to the package that contained the entire 20-track live version of *Tommy* from the Leeds University show and, supposedly, with more backing vocal overdubs. Finally, here in 2010, the record expanded yet again into the Super Deluxe 40th Anniversary Collectors' Edition, which contains not only the full Leeds show from February 14, 1970 but also the complete and supposedly 'lost' performance from Hull City Hall the following day (as well as a heavyweight-vinyl reproduction of the original six-track album, a new 64-page hard-back book, replica memorabilia from the original release, a replica seven-inch single of *Summertime Blues*/*Heaven And Hell*, and a Townshend poster).

To which you might ask: how many times does a classic like *Live At Leeds* need to be revamped, remixed and reissued? Townshend seems to feel that each generation needs its own reminder of the greatness of The Who. "The Who made very

few albums by comparison with other bands, and our back catalogue is constantly being plundered," he says. "This generally seems to be in response to various waves of resurgent interest that is stimulated by newly emerging bands. The Jam were the first to throw true light on The Who after the punk explosion. The punks did appreciate The Who, but their mission was to overthrow us, of course, and liberate our Bentleys. Then there was Supergrass, Oasis, Pearl Jam and so on. In each resurgence there has been a need to look again at the way our old stuff is presented. This particular reissue is an anniversary, of course – forty years."

Daltrey agrees: "There's a whole new audience out there for The Who. These young people might know the big hits but a lot of them aren't aware of *Live At Leeds*. So if they can get something from this package, all power to it."

But how does one improve on what is such an obvious classic? Townshend shrugs. "I'm sad to have to admit I have very little to do with this kind of work. Where there is a new angle, that allows some creative scope, I will get deeply immersed, as I did in 2000 when I released *Lifehouse Chronicles*, most of which was old recordings. However, remixing and repackaging is something I simply have to approve – with Roger, of course – at something of a distance. In this case we are lucky to have been able to rescue the Hull show."

The rescue and release of the Hull recordings is, of course, the unique selling point of the Super-Deluxe Edition. The record label trumpets the achievement with pride: "Through the wonders of modern technology, the full Hull recording has been repaired by flying in Entwistle's bass tracks from the Leeds recording to repair the Hull tapes and is now available in its entirety for the first time ever." The Hull tapes were mixed by Bob Pridden and Richard Whittaker and with Pro Tools [music production/editing software] reconstruction by Matt Hey, and they have done an exceptional job, although Roger Daltrey denies the official story that the replacement bass tracks were lifted from the Leeds show. "There was just enough trace of the bass on the masters that it could be digitally enhanced even though it would never have cut it in analogue."

In the end, though, *Live At Leeds* is not about mixes and packaging. Creating such a lavish piece of product for the record's anniversary is just corporate recognition of the power. *Live At Leeds* is a massive moment of transition frozen in audio aspic. It reveals a band at the peak of honed chops and fluid energy. Suddenly everyone in the world wanted to see Maximum R&B for themselves, and The Who were boldly precipitated into a then very new rock'n'roll superstardom where only The Rolling Stones had gone before. The record was the band's portal to an unreal world where audiences numbered in the tens of thousands, and Keith Moon could blow up hotel rooms and drive limousines into swimming pools.

All white on the night: the lads have a little break out in the countryside.

GETTY

The years between the epic mayhem of Maximum R&B at the Marquee and the same Maximum R&B preserved on *Live At Leeds* were a battle-hardening process, in which The Who both honed their playing and expanded their allegiances. In the beginning they might have been aligned with the mods but, all too often when a band comes wholly identified with a specific subculture – especially a fast-moving, fashion obsessed subculture like the mods – they tend to find themselves obsolete when trend moves on. Had The Who remained blindly obsessed with mods and the mod image, they might have amounted to nothing but a footnote. But, as Pete pointed out, they were a social mirror, and when the image in the mirror changed, they had the smarts, the talent plus an instinctive feel for what was happening on the ground to move on and remain current.

Mods held street-sway as the dominant youth movement until LSD and the psychedelic counterculture mushroomed up through the cracks in the pavement during the course of 1966, and then turned 1967 into the Summer Of Love. Although The Who could never be accused of blatantly becoming a hippie band, the moves they made in that direction might have been seen as a dire betrayal had not many of the sharpest mod faces been taking the same amazed and amazing acid-tested journey, certainly turning on, if not actually tuning in and dropping out. The button-downs and Wranglers were being replaced by velvet pants, paisley shirts and Liberty-print jackets from the hot new fashion outlets like Kleptomania and Granny Takes A Trip. During breaks from

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Rare pic of Townshend playing live while in ownership of an unbroken guitar.

GETTY

touring, Pete Townshend – who has always freely admitted to consuming more than his fair share of acid back in the day – became a regular at the UFO Club, immersing himself in the new craziness and carefully studying the new crop of bands, especially Syd Barrett and Pink Floyd in their early, *Interstellar Overdrive* era. He would also sign the extraordinarily brilliant Arthur Brown to the newly formed Track Records and co-produce his first single, *Devil's Grip*.

In the studio The Who turned out a stream of masterclass singles, that would culminate in *I Can See For Miles*, arguably one of the greatest rock'n'roll songs of all time (Townshend was crushed when it only made No.10 in the UK chart. "To me it was the ultimate Who record, yet it didn't sell. I spat on the British record buyer.") They explored uncharted territory with the mini-opera *A Quick One* and cut the classic and massively innovative *The Who Sell Out*. On the road the band went from strength to strength, continuously touring, but with such a high-maintenance road show, plus extra-curricular expenses racked up by the band in general and Keith Moon in particular, they remained constantly broke. They made their bones in the USA in a face-off with Jimi Hendrix at the Monterey International Pop Festival, and quite literally caused a TV explosion on *The Smothers Brothers Show*. The American road would ultimately lead to Woodstock, but the constant round of domestic dates seemed endless. From the Locarno Ballroom, Sunderland to Worthing Assembly Hall, they honed the mayhem that had blossomed at the Railway Hotel and the Marquee into an unstoppable, battle-hardened, Maximum R&B machine.

I caught up with the machine on a July Saturday night in 1969 night at Mothers Club in Birmingham. There were 900 people crushed into a venue to see what was promoted as The Who's last-ever club date. The nightspot had been turned into a scene that only just fell short of the Black Hole of Calcutta, with The Who on the stage at the far end. Buying a drink was close to impossible. To move and even to see the band without painfully craning was equally hard. After three or four songs it became hard to breath, as though all oxygen in the place had been used up. Keith Moon collapsed, keeling over behind his kit. A fan from the front row briefly filled in on drums, but that was a gag, not a solution, and the dense crowd sweated for nearly an hour's delay before Moon could be revived and complete the set.

"JIMI HENDRIX, CREAM, EVEN PINK FLOYD IN THEIR VERY EARLY DAYS, THREATENED TO EXPOSE THE WHO AS A LADS' BAND FAILING TO RISE TO THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE ERA..."
PETE TOWNSHEND

This summer of 1969 was a busy time. Just two weeks before the gig at Mothers, I had seen them at the Royal Albert Hall when they closed the week-long Pop Proms, double-billed with Chuck Berry. Nobody in 1969 seemed to have considered that maybe doubling-billing Chuck and The Who was a bad cultural error. As we came away from Mick Jagger in his white frock, releasing the butterflies, no one was thinking too much about the mods and rockers conflicts of five or six years earlier. And then I saw the large contingent of old-school teddy boys, in full regalia of drapes and brothel creepers, who had shown up to support Chuck Berry. Misgivings started. The teds hadn't

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Another day, another city: The Who hanging in Germany.

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forgotten anything and were more than ready to open up old wounds. They had come armed with big, old-fashioned pennies that they hurled at the stage. One hit Daltrey and cut his forehead

Jeff Dexter, who was DJ for the Pop Proms, described how the teds attempted to mob The Who and stop the show. "When the teds started yelling and being menacing down front, Tony Haslam, one of The Who's roadies, pulled out a mace gun he'd got in America and fired at a bunch that had got on the stage. Cans and huge pennies started flying up on the stage."

If the mob at Mothers and the raging teds with an ancient grudge indicated anything, it was that The Who had outgrown their roots. They were too big to play clubs and toted some negative history. Nowhere to go but up. Maybe to even survive, they had to graduate to their own version of the rock'n'roll mega-bigtime.

The means of their graduation answer was, of course, *Tommy*. As the 60s turned into the 70s, Pete Townshend's magnum opus seemed to entirely take over The Who. And why not? They were making rock history. *Tommy* became the centrepiece of epic two- and three-hour sets. No rock band, not even the Pretty Things with *S. F. Sorrow*, had attempted anything so ambitious before. But after a while, odd hints apparently circulated that maybe the deaf, dumb and blind kid might also have a downside. In the book *The Complete Chronicle Of The Who* John Entwistle is quoted as complaining: "We were better known for doing *Tommy* than we were for all the rest of the stuff. I mean, all the guitar smashing and stuff went completely out of the window. We'd turned into snob rock. We were the kind of band that Jackie Onassis would come and see."

If this was indeed the case, it suggests the possibility that *Live At Leeds* represented something of a course correction for The Who, steering them out of the opera house and back in the direction of being a solid, meat-and-potatoes rock'n'roll band. A return to Maximum R&B? Roger takes me to task when I refer to The Who as a 'rock'n'roll band'. "The Who were a *rock* band. I used to hate it when people called us a rock'n'roll band. The Stones were a rock'n'roll band. The Who were always a rock band. Listen to Eddie Cochran's version of *Summertime Blues* and our version. The tempos are completely different. Where the beat is is different." He laughs and echoes James Brown: "It's on the one!"

Asked about Entwistle's complaint, Pete is surprised. "I think John Entwistle's quote is strange. It was Keith Moon – John's intimate friend on the road – who tended to snobbery, wheeling in the celebs to dressing rooms. I think by the time John said this we were simply tired of playing *Tommy*. It had been more successful than we had expected. Remember too that all of us in the band quickly forgot the reality of our situation, what might have happened. If *Tommy* had failed we would have slid into ignominy. We had been a UK singles band who smashed guitars and wore funny outfits prior to *Tommy*. We were not all that far from Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick And Titch – appearing every month on *Top Of The Pops*, and trying to get to number one. Jimi Hendrix and Cream – and even Pink Floyd in their very early days – threatened to expose The Who as a lads' band who were failing to rise to the spiritual and subversive romanticism of the psychedelic era."

"THE PUNKS DID APPRECIATE THE WHO, BUT THEIR MISSION WAS TO OVERTHROW US, OF COURSE, AND LIBERATE OUR BENTLEYS..."
PETE TOWNSHEND

Pete Townshend has always been an odd mixture of arrogance and self-deprecation. One moment he behaves like a combo of guitar maniac and the greatest songwriter on the planet, the next he is an insecure seeker after cosmically elusive answers. This may be the key to his driven creativity. Rather than rest on his laurels after *Tommy* and *Live At Leeds*, Townshend was back at work – according to some accounts, driving himself to a near-breakdown – writing songs like *Baba O'Riley, Behind Blue Eyes* and *Won't Get Fooled Again* for the July 1971 release of *Who's Next*, with its iconic cover showing the four band members pissing on the monolith. The cover concept is usually assumed to be a typical Bash Street Kids fuck-you from The Who to movie director Stanley Kubrick and his epic *2001: A Space Odyssey* after Kubrick had declined to direct a film version of *Tommy*, but another interpretation might well have been that the *Who's Next* monolith was the looming phenomena of US stadium rock that would absorb so much of the band's energy over the next decade. And those songs – plus parts of *Tommy* – would become the core of how the The Who became kings of the North American 'teenage wasteland'.

When I lived in New York, I tried to avoid stadium shows. Too many wasted American youth whose best idea was to bellow along with *Baba O'Riley* and then end the night unconscious or in jail. I went to Shea Stadium to see the Mets play baseball more times than to see rock stars play guitar. In October 1982, however, I made an exception. The Who had announced they were finally retiring from the brontosaurus stomp, passing their pinball crown to The Clash, who would open for them. Was this the end of the road for Maximum R&B? (Actually, no. In later years we'd learn that The Who would retire from the arena circuit as willingly as Michael Corleone resigned from organised crime, only to be regularly dragged back with offers they couldn't refuse.)

After the show, I wrote in the *Village Voice*: "The

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See me... playing New York's Shea Stadium in later life.

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artists who go this stadium route tend, whether they know it or not, to become captives of these assemblies. Their live work is only heard in the open air or in the dubious acoustics of very big buildings. And though the crowds provide bursts of extreme adulation and fixes of intense energy, they are also possessed of a massive inertia that drags, stretches and slows the music. They seem to like it ponderous. They like songs that start with a delicate guitar figure and some sobbing, histrionic singing, and, nine minutes later, have slowly built to the aural equivalent of the bombing of Dresden. No matter how they may holler for rock'n'roll, stadium crowds are suckers for this Godzilla dynamic. They love an anthem… that has as much to do with Tchaikovsky's cannons as it does with Little Richard."

I emailed this clip to Pete and he agreed. "My songs worked well in the stadium context, by accident rather than design at first. *Pinball Wizard* was when I first used this building system, *Listening To You* was the second. Their power to hold a large, dazed and distant audience had been proved at Woodstock. I simply watched it happen with those two songs, amazed. What is also interesting is that this Shea concert in 1982 felt to me like the end of The Who and, as fan of the Clash, I was sad because it also felt like the end of The Clash – partly because they were so well-received at Shea, and seemed delighted to be the new superstars of stadium rock all of a sudden. I left The Who after this tour, absolutely certain that stadium rock was a crock of shit. Remember that we had experienced mass death at our Cincinnati show a few years before. *Live At Leeds* was played before an audience who were really listening, by musicians who listened to each other. We were able to use a much wider dynamic, not relying simply on anthemic celebration. Roger was our stadium King – playing to the distance – and that King was crowned at Woodstock. I preferred to heckle the front row. Still do. But both of us were happier in a medium-sized venue with good acoustics. We still are."

Daltrey matter-of-factly accepts the compliment. "That's right. It's about the music. Pete plays the front row. I play the back. For me it was always about driving the music through the crowd."

I had to freely confess I was ignoring logistics, commercial reality, and even the vast numbers of people in any given city who wanted to see star acts. In a narrow creative/artistic context I was speculating (with some cheap faux-McLuhan) about the impact of the venue on the music, and that playing stadia produced a built-in slow-down. Again Pete agrees.

"You are dead on. However, it is a conceit to worry too much about it when U2 are today launching spaceships that look suspiciously like those once launched by ELO in 1978. I think by the time I announced I was leaving The Who in early 1982, I felt we had completely lost our way. If that live audience wanted spectacle, and very large numbers of fans wanted to see us, then a fair bit of our *Live At Leeds* dynamic would be lost. Your comment about the slowly developing dynamic curve of most stadium rock anthems is correct. Heavy metal – despite the Spinal Tap allusions – did tend to keep things musical at festivals and stadiums. But the music itself tended to be a virtuosic display, probably of a variety kicked off by Led Zeppelin, Cream and Jimi Hendrix rather than The Who. *Live At Leeds* was our 'virtuosic' moment. We knew it was a competition we couldn't win. John Entwistle was our only truly virtuosic musician. The other three of us were showmen, raconteurs and athletes. We used noise, screams, lasers and smoke bombs where those other bands simply played music. From thirty rows back at a Cream gig all you were doing was listening to a big PA system.

"HEAVY METAL KEPT THINGS MUSICAL AT STADIUMS. BUT THE MUSIC WAS A VIRTUOSIC DISPLAY. IT WAS A COMPETITION WE COULDN'T WIN."
PETE TOWNSHEND

"The challenge today is to make festival, stadium and large arena shows work musically along with spectacle," he says, warming to the subject. "No musician can make a living playing pubs and clubs the way Dr. Feelgood did for a while. It looks 'authentic'. It looks 'real'. It is in fact vanity. Today you probably need to be rich before you can do it. In our early days, bands kept their day jobs for a very long time into their careers. Finally, if large events can be made to work by the use of anthemic rock, then so be it. The Who's music is not all anthemic rock, that is just the music that worked best for us in stadiums. With the now classic songs I came up with soon after the Leeds and Hull recordings, like *Baba O'Riley* and *Won't Get Fooled Again*, I was writing for a story. However, I was aware that each song had to work like a short rock show in its own right – building slowly to a climax. I had learned this from playing *Tommy* at Woodstock. If *Tommy* was a set of singles strung together, then *Who's Next*, as I first conceived it, was a group of songs each intended to be a concert in itself – each member of the audience with their own song. Difficult, of course, but a good idea. And of course it worked better than I could have imagined. I'm not afraid of trying to be rock's Wagner, any more than Roger Waters is."

And what comes next? Is the future going to be entirely a twilight of boxed CD sets and reissues from the glory days? Roger laughs. "We never know where we're going. You're joking. We're talking about some shows next year. Pete's writing. I wait with open ears. His writing always excites me. I'm a huge Townshend fan. Even if he's not writing for The Who it'll be something good. You can bet your life on that."

Townshend also seems to feel they soon may be reunited. "I think we have tried everything over the years. I've played tiny clubs as a solo artist. Roger has played with symphony orchestras. I've been to Broadway. Roger has been a stage actor. He has recently done solo shows as a support act to Eric Clapton. I know that I can out-Slash Slash, guitar master that he is, merely by wearing the right hat and not touching my guitar at all. The magic is now osmotic. But together, Roger and I turn into Godzilla. Or rather the Hulk. We can't help ourselves. Within minutes on any stage we start to go green, our muscles bulge and away we go. Even a love song like *Tea & Theatre*, about the final days of old age, turns into Grand Opera."

The Super-Deluxe edition of Live At Leeds was released on November 15, 2010 via Universal.

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EIGHT MILES HIGH

★THE BYRDS

It was the single that should have launched The Byrds into the stratosphere. So why did it instead mark the precise moment when it all came crashing down?

WORDS: HENRY YATES

ROLLING STONED?

While it is beyond doubt that *Eight Miles High* was conceived during the Byrds' trip to London in August 1965, Gene Clark has also claimed that the musical structure was sketched out in the company of Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones when the two bands toured the US together that June.

"Brian never wanted credit," Clark has said. "He never really got credit for it. Me and Brian picked up the idea later down the line, and we groomed it for months, presented it back to Crosby and McGuinn, and they liked it so much that they went real deep into it, so it ended up all three of us writing it."

GETTY

The Byrds' Gene Clark spent their first transatlantic flight, in August 1965, looking out of the window, watching as the Californian sunshine gave way to the drizzle of London.

As the plane made its slow descent towards the rain-lashed runway of London Airport, Clark's muse kicked in, and by the time The Byrds returned to America he had written some lyrics about the trip.

When The Byrds' *Eight Miles High* was released in December 1965, it took little delving to identify the *'rain-grey town, known for its sound'* as the London that Clark had observed from the plane. The reference to *'signs in the street that say where you're going'* was revealed as a dig at the random placing of street signs around the English capital, while *'nowhere is there warmth to be found among those losing their ground'* was a nod to the hostility they encountered from The Birds, a British mod group who accused the band of stealing their name.

That same flight also prompted the song's title. "We started it as *Six Miles High*," guitarist Roger McGuinn recalls, "because that's the approximate altitude that commercial airlines fly. Forty-two thousand feet – or about eight miles high – is the altitude reserved for military aircraft. But Gene said eight miles sounds better than six, and it did sound more poetic. It was also around the time of [The Beatles'] *Eight Days A Week*, so that was another hook."

Eight Miles High represented a musical departure for The Byrds. While the verses were still carried by the harmonies of Clark, Roger McGuinn and David Crosby, the psychedelic intro and breakdown showed influences that had been buried on their covers of Bob Dylan songs. "The bass intro is really borrowed from John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*," bassist Chris Hillman admits. "And we were listening to a lot of Ravi Shankar."

"It was a drug song and it wasn't a drug song at the same time."

The Byrds originally recorded *Eight Miles High* at RCA's Victor Studios, with Jim Dickson producing and Dave Hassinger as engineer. It was raw but powerful. The band were crushed to discover that their contract with CBS stipulated that the track could not be released because it had been cut at a non-Columbia studio. For better or worse, *Eight Miles High* was promptly re-recorded with Allen Stanton producing.

Asked whether it's better, Hillman muses: "I'm not sure. The RCA version is more spontaneous. We tried to slip in the RCA version as the take from Columbia, but we got caught doing that."

In April 1966, an innocuous sheet of paper landed on the desk of every radio programmer and disc jockey in America. Bill Gavin's Record Report, a weekly 'tip sheet' that prescribed what stations should play, was a familiar sight among industry insiders. On this occasion, its tone was one of spluttering outrage. 'We have dropped *Eight Miles High* from our recommended playlist,' the report sniffed. 'In our opinion, this record implies encouragement and/or approval of the use of marijuana or LSD.' As a result, the single was banned in Houston, Baltimore and Washington, and stalled at its No.14 *Billboard* peak.

Was *Eight Miles High* actually about drugs? Hillman insists otherwise: "I stand as witness," the bassist says, "it was never about that. Everybody was getting crazy about marijuana use, so we were immediately branded. It was heading up the charts in the States until that tip sheet. I think the word 'high' did it. I think the inclusion of that word set the unenlightened going."

"We could have called the song Forty-Two Thousand, Two Hundred And Forty Feet," he added, of its controversial title, "but somehow that didn't seem a very commercial song title, and it certainly wouldn't have scanned."

For all the band's protestations, it seems naïve to conclude that *Eight Miles High* referred solely to altitude. Certainly The Byrds were taking drugs at this point, albeit not in the quantities that would creep in later. "Cigarettes, a little marijuana, some drinks, a couple of acid things – that's it," Hillman recalls. "Gene was probably drinking coffee when he wrote that lyric."

Perhaps the logical conclusion is that *Eight Miles High* refers to both the flight and drugs. It's an argument that is strengthened by the slippery testimony of Crosby (his account changed whenever pressed on the subject). "Of course it was a drug song," he once claimed. "We were stoned when we wrote it. We can also justifiably say that it wasn't a drug song because it was written about the trip to London. It was a drug song and it wasn't a drug song at the same time."

Eight Miles High should have been the song that launched The Byrds into the stratosphere. Instead it marked the precise moment when it all fell down. Shortly after it was recorded, Gene Clark quit the band. And although their success continued, the chemistry was fractured again in 1967 by the departure of David Crosby.

"If The Byrds had stuck together – the five original guys – after *Eight Miles High*," Hillman sighs, "who knows what we would have done."

McGuinn is more blunt about the damage caused by the controversy: "It blew us out of the game." ✪

The Byrds on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1965.
GETTY

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The Byrds: California dreamin'

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
March 1966

CHART POSITION
Peaked at No.14 on US Billboard chart, charted for 1 week at No.28 in UK.

PERSONNEL
Roger McGuinn: *vocals, guitar*
Gene Clark: *vocals, percussion*
David Crosby: *vocals, bass*
Chris Hillman: *bass*
Michael Clarke: *drums*

PRODUCER
Allen Stanton on single version, Jim Dickson and Dave Hassinger on RCA original.

LABEL
Columbia Records

FACT
Bassist Chris Hillman is still so fond of Eight Miles High that he has recorded a cover– complete with mandolin, dobro, fiddles and acoustic guitars – on his solo album, *The Other Side.*

Dawning of a

The cover of Pink Floyd's debut album *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* was very much of its time. Hugh Fielder talks to sleeve photographer Vic Singh about prisms, George Harrison and not getting paid. **Photos Vic Singh**

new era

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It's not just the record of Pink Floyd's *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* that makes it an automatic contender for the finest psychedelic album of all time (and a shoo-in for No.1 in *Classic Rock*'s 42 essential psychedelic albums). The cover of the album is also an iconic vision of psychedelia. It presents an altered perception of a visual image, in this case the band, as if you're looking at them through a kaleidoscope. Each member appears three or four times, blurring into themselves and each other. The effect is disorienting, striking, engrossing and stimulating, perfectly reflecting the musical contents within.

But unlike the music, which has been endlessly analysed and adored, there is precious little to be found about the cover. Which is strange when you consider that there are people out there who have dissected Syd Barrett's every bowel movement in an attempt to explain the fragile genius who created the music on Pink Floyd's 1967 debut album. And even among the plethora of books about one of the biggest-selling bands on the planet there's virtually no mention of the cover, apart from one tome that is exclusively devoted to the album. Are they all missing the bigger picture, so to speak?

On the back cover of the album it states: 'Front Cover Photo: Vic Singh.' Apart from the band members there are only four other credits on the album and Singh comes below the producer (Norman Smith) and the recording engineer (Peter Bown) but above the rear cover designer (Syd Barrett). It's a more prominent credit than most photographers would expect to get, then or now. It's certainly more conspicuous than the credit that artist Peter Blake received for his considerable efforts on The Beatles' *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album, released the same year.

You'll search long and hard to find Singh's credit on another album cover. Pink Floyd used Storm Thorgerson and Hipgnosis for all their subsequent albums apart from *The Wall* and *The Final Cut* (although drummer Nick Mason illustrated the *Relics* compilation). That's because Singh was not a rock photographer, he was a fashion photographer. The *Piper* cover was a glorious one-off, a serendipitous collision in the febrile atmosphere that propelled London's 'Swinging 60s'. With a little help from George Harrison, as we shall see.

"It just happened," says Singh, recalling both the era and the events that surrounded the making of the cover. "People would just come together. One thing would lead to another and they'd link up and do things. There was the feeling that you could try anything. It was such a creative atmosphere. Until finally it became this huge thing that made this country the forefront of music and fashion, even motor cars for that matter."

Singh's background is the kind of culture clash that flourished amid the new meritocracy that was another feature of the decade. His father was the Raja of Kalakankar, a province in Northern India by the Ganges. His mother was the daughter of an Austrian society photographer. At the age of six he was sent to boarding school in England and, after his mother moved to London, had a public school education at the somewhat progressive St Christopher's College in Letchworth, Hertfordshire.

"They had to be in exactly the right place if the final picture was going to work."

"My family background meant that work was not really on the agenda because we already owned everything," says Singh with a smile. But after his Western education, a return to the stultifying privilege of the Raj was equally unthinkable. So he went to St Martin's College Of Art in London where he became interested in photography.

He got a job, starting at the bottom – as a junior assistant at the Mayflower Studio in London,

Head games: Vic Singh has George Harrison to thank for his iconic *Piper At The Gates...* sleeve shot.

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Split personalities: *Piper* remains one of the few Floyd albums with band members featured in the cover art.

sweeping the floor and making the tea – before moving on to Studio Five where he found himself working with David Bailey and his career as a fashion photographer took off, just as British fashion itself was taking off.

Within a couple of years he'd opened his own studio and was enjoying life at the hub of the Swinging 60s. "I was part of an influential crowd. I had a flat in the Kings Road and my girlfriend was a model. I would come home from the studio and there might be 30 or 40 people there – actors, musicians, models, designers, fashion editors, hustlers, dealers. It was a popular place to live. "

With fashion photography consuming his time, Singh admits he wasn't taking much interest in the music scene – until one day when his friend and model Patti Boyd turned up with George Harrison in tow. "There was this strange thing of meeting someone who was very famous and then going to the pub and having a beer with them and just being very normal," he remembers. "George and I became friends and I used to go and hang out at his place in the country near Henley. We used to sit for hours and discuss mysticism because it interested us both."

But apart from Beatles concerts "where we would have to run for our lives afterwards", Singh didn't frequent the London music scene – neither the trendy clubs like The Marquee, the fashionable late-night watering holes like the Scotch Of St James, nor the burgeoning underground scene at UFO where Pink Floyd were gaining a reputation as the unofficial house band. So when he got a phonecall from the band's management in the early summer of 1967 asking if he'd be interested in photographing the group at his studio it came out of the blue.

"I'd met the band at an event in Piccadilly a few weeks earlier – we used to call them happenings back then," recalls Singh. "So I knew about them but I'd never seen them play. I asked whether they had anything particular in mind for the session but they said no, they'd leave it up to me."

The management of Pink Floyd at that time can recollect very little about the events surrounding the cover of *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*. But then it was 1967 after all and co-manager Peter Jenner was preoccupied in the studio with Pink Floyd, shouting the names of planets into a megaphone at the start of *Astronomy Domine*. His partner Andrew King, however, had a vague recollection that Singh was recommended to them. "I think it was another brilliant Hoppy suggestion," he says. John 'Hoppy' Hopkins was a radical photo-journalist who was a prime mover in the London underground scene, co-founding the UFO Club and the hippy house newspaper *International Times*. "We didn't want to use the normal hacks at EMI and we were sort of asserting our independence," says King.

"It was a great time for English photography and the sort of pictures that were in *Vogue* and other fashion magazines at the time were excellent," remembers King as the mists of time briefly clear. "Fashion photography was moving at a rate of knots but showbiz photography wasn't. I have a feeling that Hoppy knew Vic Singh and we thought: 'Great, let's use somebody exciting and young because it could be fun and unusual and interesting too.'"

Meanwhile, Singh was looking for something fun and unusual and interesting for the photo session. "They'd sent me an advance copy of the album, and I was amazed by it," he remembers. "It sounded very alien to begin with but then I began to understand the kind of thing they were aiming at and I wanted to come up with a picture that reflected that.

"I had this prism lens that George Harrison had given me one day when I was at his house. We were watching his home cinema and just messing around. He'd said: 'Take it, because I don't know what to do with it and you might find some use for it.' The prism lens splits the image but you have to set up the shot carefully in advance because if you just point the camera and take a picture with it, it comes out looking weird. Everything looks mushy because the lens softens the image.

"The record and the sleeve have come to represent the roots of Pink Floyd."

"I thought it might be perfect for the sleeve. So I set up the studio and tested it and it seemed to work. But it was still quite soft so I asked the group to bring some colourful clothes with them because I thought that would provide a bright contrast, especially if the lighting was right. So they arrived on the day with all these clothes and after we'd had a coffee they changed into them. I then had to position them against this white background to get the picture I was looking for. The positioning was crucial because the image was going to break up and they all had to be in exactly the right place if the final picture was going to work."

These days such a shot would be approached quite differently. In fact you probably wouldn't even try to shoot the band together. It would be easier to take individual shots and then superimpose them. But that was not an option back then. "Once I showed them the Polaroids and they could see how important the positioning and the lighting was, they started to get into it, particularly Syd," says Singh. "They could see that if everything was done right it would look really good. And we had the *Piper* music blasting out of these big speakers I had in the studio. You could hear it right down the street.

"Then it was just a matter of taking the proper shots. There weren't too many ways to take it because of the overlapping and everything, and if one of them moved it changed the whole look of the shot. I ended up taking about four or five reels – 40 to 50 shots – so they had plenty to choose from and there would hopefully be one in which they all looked good."

For the record, there were no filters or other effects, apart from the prism. "It was straight through the Hasselblad on to Ektochrome, " states Singh. And no stylists or make-up artists in attendance either. "Certainly not. Even the models did their own make-up back then."

The session lasted for the whole day and after Singh had sent the pictures round to the management a few days later he phoned to find out if everything was OK. "'Yeah, they're great,' I was told. They said they'd be using them and that Syd was designing the back cover, so I said 'fine' and went back to doing my thing and left them to choose the shot.

"A while later I saw the cover and it looked fine. I can't remember whether I saw it in a shop or if somebody showed it to me. Not only does everybody look OK in the shot but the lettering of the word Pink Floyd fits perfectly in the middle of it. Some of the other pictures were just as good but there wasn't the space to put the lettering in. That's why they chose it."

He didn't hear from Pink Floyd again and he didn't go to a gig. And he didn't get paid either. "So the copyright is mine. I own that shot but I'm not making a big deal out of it. Because as far as I was concerned they were skint at the time. And soon after the album came out they started having problems with Syd. Then he left and the management changed and apparently all the pictures were sent to Storm Thorgerson at Hipgnosis when he started doing all their graphics. And he's done some brilliant work for them but by then I'd moved on."

In fact, the Swinging 60s came to an abrupt end for Singh. "I got involved in films and I went skint. So then I got pissed off with everything and went and lived in the country. I became a father and raised a child. I worked to pay the rent, nothing more, just living day to day with nature."

He's back in London, still living just off the Kings Road, working in digital photography and film, more interested in street and club fashion than the major label fashion industry: "Unless you embrace the time now and embrace what is happening today, then artistically you're dead". But he maintains that "the work I'm doing now is based on psychedelia. Because that attitude is as relevant today as it was in the 60s".

And he's still proud of *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* cover. "That record and the sleeve have come to represent the roots of Pink Floyd and the picture still communicates that era to people."

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The Beatles, May 19, 1967, L-R: Ringo Starr, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison.

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HOT PEPPER

As the acclaimed eighth **Beatles** album celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2017, prog icons such as Jon Anderson, Rick Wakeman, Steve Hackett and Roger Waters discussed the impact the record had on the burgeoning prog rock scene.

Mr Kite: **Dave Everley**

Everyone who was there at the time can remember exactly where they were when they first heard Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. For Rick Wakeman, the epiphany came in the living room of his parents' suburban house in Northolt Park Green, Middlesex as he listened to his father's old Radiogram.

"The BBC were doing the first playing of it, and I was eagerly awaiting this album, just as everybody was," recalls Wakeman of hearing The Beatles' landmark eighth album. "The opening blew me away. I thought, 'This is just something else.' And then what came on after it was just, 'Oh wow, this is completely different.' The next day I bought it. As did millions and millions of others."

Roger Waters – whose own band, Pink Floyd, recorded their debut album The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn in Abbey Road at the same time as The Beatles were laying down Sgt Pepper – was listening to the same broadcast as he was driving to some long-forgotten destination.

"I remember pulling the car over into a lay-by, and we sat there and listened to it," Waters told US radio station KLCS a few years ago. "Somebody played the whole thing on the radio. And I can remember sitting in this old, beat-up Zephyr 4, like that [sits for a long period, completely agape]."

For Steve Hackett, his first encounter with the record that would come to define the era and help sow the seeds for progressive rock came slightly later. "I grew up in Pimlico, so Chelsea was on the doorstep," says the guitarist today. "I remember going to the Chelsea antiques market. I went up to the second floor, into this room that had Indian hanging silks, and there was this strange music playing. It wasn't until I got hold of the album that I realised it was Within You Without You. They had completely reinvented themselves, unrecognisably so in fact."

"The Beatles were the first progressive band. There were other bands making adventurous music – The Beach Boys, Frank Zappa and various others. But The Beatles were doing it first, not just with Sgt Pepper, but before too."

– Jon Anderson

Sgt Pepper has just turned 50, and the fact that so many people have such clear memories half a century on is testament to its standing as one of the most significant albums ever released. As with so many other strands of music, its influence on prog is huge.

Let's be clear: Sgt Pepper wasn't the first

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A Day In The Life: The Beatles at the press launch for Sgt Pepper.

progressive rock album. But the record, as with the band who created it, did more than any other to open up the minds of a generation of aspiring musicians who would go on to lay down the foundations of progressive rock soon afterwards.

"The Beatles were the first progressive band," says Jon Anderson, who was a year from co-founding Yes when Sgt Pepper was released in May 1967. "There were other bands making adventurous music – The Beach Boys, Frank Zappa and various others. But The Beatles were doing it first, not just with Sgt Pepper, but before too."

Anderson himself was playing residencies in Hamburg with his band The Warriors when he first heard Sgt Pepper. "Me and my friends in the band played that album endlessly for about three weeks," he says. "We'd do a show, then go back and listen to Sgt Pepper all night. We were high as kites, on so many levels, then the album came out and we got even higher. It was like someone opening a door to revolutionary music."

Sgt Pepper didn't come entirely out of the blue. The Beatles had long since transcended their roots as an R&B-influenced pop band, something proven by the 1966 single Eleanor Rigby, a slice of foreboding Scouse Gothic that sounded like nothing that had come before.

"Eleanor Rigby was such a groundbreaking song," says Hackett. "It wasn't a traditional pop song. It was this character portrait, this short story. And you can almost smell the dust on the old instruments that were being used. It had such an adventurous spirit, and you can trace that thread into Sgt Pepper."

That song, along with the equally revolutionary psychedelic freakout Tomorrow Never Knows, appear on 1966's Revolver, the last album the band recorded before they announced their retirement from touring in August of that year. That decision proved to be arguably the most significant of their career, allowing them to devote their attention to the studio – something that, in the hands of The Beatles and their producer George Martin, became the most important instrument in their arsenal.

The sobriquet of 'The Fifth Beatle' has frequently been hung around Martin's neck, and rightly so. He began as their producer, arranger and mentor, but by the time of Sgt Pepper, he was their co-conspirator too. It was Martin who did everything from manipulating the tape loops on Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds, playing the harpsichord on Fixing A Hole and pioneering the use of cross-fades to remove the gaps between songs to creating the famous 40-second long final chord on A Day In The Life. Remarkably, all of this was done on four-track machines.

"When George told me the limited equipment they had to record it on, and the way he bounced one track onto another to make sure they had enough to do the next thing, I just thought, 'How the hell did they do it?'" says Wakeman. "This was a man and a band trying very hard to record music that technically shouldn't have been possible. It was that spirit of studio experimentation that the progressive bands would pick up on."

The Beatles recorded Sgt Pepper with Martin and engineer Geoff Emerick over a period of five months between November 1966 and April 1967. It was a measure of how fast the creative river was flowing that the first song they recorded for Sgt Pepper, Lennon's kaleidoscopic Strawberry Fields Forever, was hived off as a stand-alone double A-side single backed by Penny Lane in February 1967 and didn't feature on the finished album (memorably, Strawberry Fields Forever was one of the first hit singles to feature a Mellotron, which Lennon had been introduced to by The Moody Blues' Mike Pinder).

The seed for the (very) loose Sgt Pepper concept came from Paul McCartney, who had the idea of a set of songs recorded by a fictional band who were one part Edwardian music hall entertainers, one part LSD-fuelled visionaries. It wasn't a concept album as such – and even if it was, it was a long way from being the first – but as with virtually everything they did, The Beatles popularised the idea that a set of songs could be conceptually and musically linked.

"Sgt Pepper was undoubtedly a form of concept prog," says Rick Wakeman. "It might not have been a full-on concept album, but there's seriously conceptual stuff in there."

"It's a film for the ear," says Steve Hackett. "There are all these little character portraits, vignettes. The Beatles were really good at coming up with these flashpoints in people's lives. Like She's Leaving Home – the moment where she's just about to go. Or Being For The Benefit Of Mr Kite!, where it wanders into the fairground at the end. That's so vivid."

But strip away both the quasi-conceptual element and George Martin's groundbreaking production, and Sgt Pepper works on the most elemental level. Like the prog bands they inspired, The Beatles realised that all the highfalutin artistry was nothing without a great song at the heart of it.

"Musically, their songwriting was at the highest quality," says Wakeman. "If you've got a great song, you can do anything with it. That showed with A Little Help From My Friends. Joe Cocker turned this pretty little pop tune into a classic rock song."

MARK AND COLLEEN HAYWARD/GETTY IMAGES

L-R: Brian Epstein, George Martin and Geoff Emerick at Abbey Road Studios, June 1967.

Even the album's most overtly progressive moment, the climactic A Day In The Life, is effectively two relatively conventional songs spliced together. Jon Anderson has even covered it live, unaccompanied apart from a ukelele. "It's a beautiful song," he says. "Very progressive, but also very simple."

When Sgt Pepper was released on June 1, 1967, the revolution was already underway. In America, the psychedelic underground was emerging, arms outstretched, into the sunlight. In Britain, the youthquakes of the mid-60s had helped set London swinging. Sgt Pepper was simultaneously the bridge between these two worlds and their soundtrack.

"You have to remember that this was more than just music," says Steve Hackett. "We got stoned to it, made love to it, all of those things. It's part of your DNA if you were that age at the time. It's more than just a record. It defines the times."

Part of the album's attraction for some was its countercultural connections, especially its associations with drug culture, most notably on Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds. John Lennon and Paul McCartney both denied the song was a not-so-sly nod to LSD, while the latter insisted that the album wasn't written under the influence of any kind of drug. But for many of the people listening, the end result had much the same effect.

"Sgt Pepper was very cosmic," says Anderson. "We got pretty stoned listening to it without drugs. It was just a constant flow of emotion."

"You have to remember that this was more than just music. We got stoned to it, made love to it, all of those things. It's part of your DNA if you were that age at the time. It's more than just a record. It defines the times." – Steve Hackett

Pepper had a more earthly impact too. The 45rpm single had long been the pop industry's format of choice (and major cash cow), but its importance was being eroded. Inspired in part by folk-era Bob Dylan, The Beatles had shown that the long-playing album could be more than just a collection of hits with 1966's Revolver, cracking open the door for Zappa, The Beach Boys and countless others. But such was the cultural weight of the one-time Fab Four that Sgt Pepper enshrined the notion of the album as a self-contained piece of art, one of the pillars of progressive rock.

"Sgt Pepper established the fact that albums were the new big thing," Pink Floyd's Nick Mason said. "We have a huge debt of gratitude to The Beatles because it transformed the relationship with the record company, who stopped trying to make us make singles and more or less said, 'Get on with it.' And it gave us far more studio time and far more opportunity to work on different ideas and so on."

The Beatles had already broadened the parameters of pop on Rubber Soul and its follow-up Revolver, but Sgt Pepper offered a full-spectrum musical experience. All life was here, from undiluted psychedelia (Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds) and proto-hard rock (the all-too-brief reprise of the title track) to the heartfelt quasi-Eastern spiritualism of George Harrison's Within You Without You, a song that Steve Hackett marks as "a significant turning point in what would become known as world music". But at heart, Sgt Pepper was part of the grand British music hall tradition that would extend to some of prog's more theatrical exponents, not least Genesis.

"There's an aspect of The Beatles that's a vaudeville band," says Hackett. "There's as much George Formby in there as there was Chuck Berry. But that was their strength – they were able to draw from British music hall tradition, R&B and even Indian music. They adopted a pan-genre approach that made it possible for so many other British bands to go, 'Right then, if they've done that, we can include a bit of jazz or a bit of classical…'"

Sgt Pepper's impact on prog's founding fathers was instantaneous. In the wake of hearing it, Jon Anderson remembers urging his band The Warriors to rehearse more "because we had all this new and wonderful music to be made. They told me to piss off, so I left and eventually met Chris Squire and formed Yes".

For others, the possibility was more existential. "What I learned was that it was okay for us to express ourselves," said Roger Waters. "That we could be free artists and there was value in that freedom."

For others still, it was musical: Robert Fripp, who had listened to the same BBC broadcast as Rick Wakeman, recalled King Crimson covering Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds during the band's early rehearsals. As The Moody Blues' Justin Hayward says: "Whatever The Beatles did, people followed."

The debate about whether Sgt Pepper is even a prog album – let alone the first – still rages 50 years after its release. But whatever question you raise, Pepper has an answer. Take the most common claim levelled at it: that it lacks the moments of individual virtuosity that would come to define prog. True, but what it does have is a collective virtuosity on almost every level – musical, conceptual, cultural, spiritual. Zappa, The Beach Boys and the rest each possessed several of those characteristics, but Pepper was the only one that truly brought them all together. And that, more than anything, mark it as the true starting point for prog's 50-year-and-counting adventure.

"It moved things forward a couple of years in an instant," says Rick Wakeman. "It took us that much closer to what would become progressive rock."

"Pepper is the template for all things weird and wonderful," says Steve Hackett. "The Beatles decided they were going to change everything. And thank God they did."

DAVID MAGNUS/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

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the COSMIC VARIETY SHOW

Syd Barrett was catatonic. **Jimi Hendrix** was encouraging **Keith Emerson** to throw knives at him. **Lemmy** was one of the roadies. Welcome to the **Jimi Hendrix/Pink Floyd/The Move/The Nice/ Amen Corner/Eire Apparent/Outer Limits** jaunt of late 1967, the package tour that was the end of an era and "like a school trip". On acid.

Words: **Glenn Povey** Illustration: **Magictorch**

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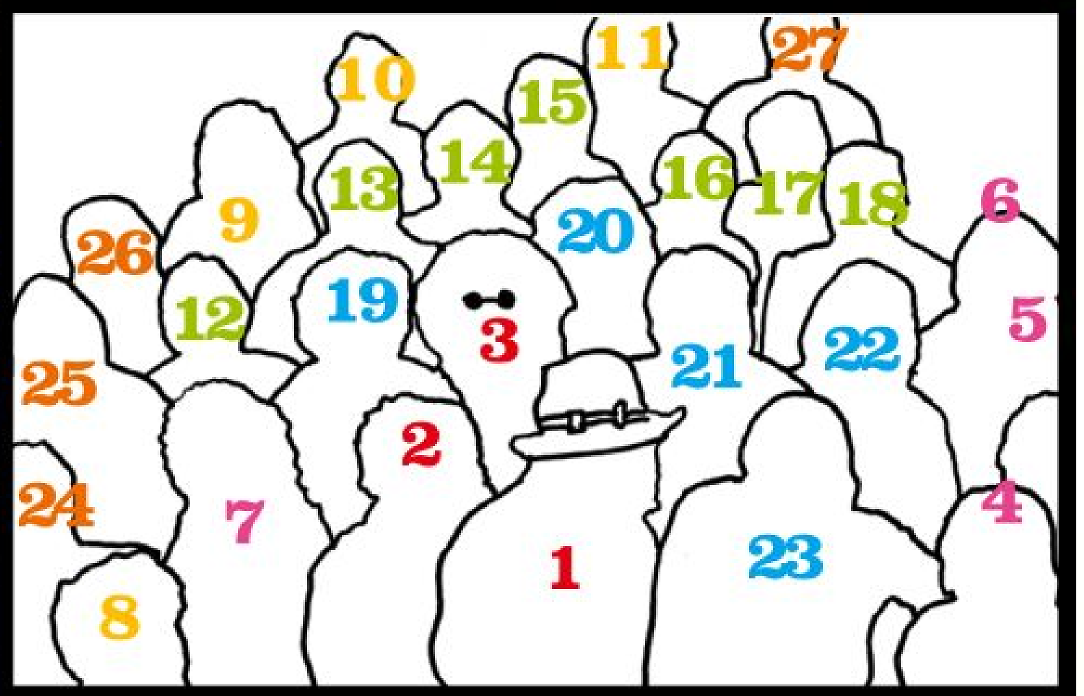
Most of the cast of characters on that 1967 "school trip" (The Nice are conspicuous by their absence).



Jimi Hendrix Experience
1 Jimi Hendrix
2 Mitch Mitchell
3 Noel Redding
Pink Floyd
4 Roger Waters
5 Syd Barrett
6 Richard Wright
7 Nick Mason
Eire Apparent
8 Eddie Graham
9 Henry McCullough
10 Chris Stewart
11 Dave Lutton
Amen Corner
12 Blue Weaver
13 Alan Jones
14 Dennis Bryon
15 Mike Smith
16 Neil Jones
17 Clive Taylor
18 Andy Fairweather-Lowe
The Move
19 Trevor Burton
20 Ace Kefford
21 Bev Bevan
22 Roy Wood
23 Carl Wayne
The Outer Limits
24 Gerry Smith
25 Jeff Christie
26 Stan Drogie
26 Steve Isherwood

In November 1967, a star-studded but unlikely assemblage of psychedelic, rock and soul bands set out in a fleet of cars, Transit vans and coaches on a 21-date tour. They would play theatres and civic halls the length and breadth of Britain, in a vague attempt to emulate the traditional 'package' tour of yesteryear.

Veteran music biz promoters Tito Burns and Harold Davison, who promoted the tour, knew the economic value of the theatre package tour well – they'd made a business out of it back in the day. But the combination of bands drawn up for this tour was a bit way-out even for those times. This wasn't a package tour featuring end-of-pier comedians or cabaret acts, this was a bill featuring the cream of the new music. Featuring some of the craziest, most pioneering and – it would turn out – most influential bands of all time: The Jimi Hendrix Experience and Pink Floyd, supported by The Move, The Nice, Amen Corner, Eire Apparent and The Outer Limits.

Future Stiff Records co-founder Dave Robinson was Eire Apparent's Road Manager. "In 1967 you were beginning to get the 'album artists'," he says. "More musical, get your rocks off. So it was the last of those kind of tours. Prior to that it was people doing their little three-minute numbers from *Top Of The Pops*, really. So you had The Move, who were kind of singley but also had delusions of musical grandeur, and The Nice, who although they had 12 minutes, usually played just one number."

These days, when one Led Zeppelin gig attracts ticket requests in their millions, a similar bill would sell out stadiums in a flash. But there were no guarantees back in 1967. Promotional touring didn't exist back in the 60s, bands just accepted the fact that if they weren't in the recording studio their management expected them to be out on the road.

For the Jimi Hendrix Experience this would be their second full tour of the UK, having spent much of the summer months in mainland Europe and the US, basking in the glory of having played an awe-inspiring, now legendary, set at the Monterey Festival. Hit singles had ensured much anticipation – Hendrix went from zero to hero in a matter of weeks. Pink Floyd, meanwhile, did the reverse: they took an unhealthy delight in frightening their audiences into submission, or disgust. And although they had enjoyed chart success, their career was hanging in the balance. "We could clear halls so fast it wasn't true," recalled Nick Mason. "I mean, they were outraged by what came round on the revolving stage and they lost very little time in trying to make this clear."

The show was comprised of two halves with an interval. Newcomers The Outer Limits and Eire Apparent opened with just eight minutes apiece; Amen Corner were next up with 15 minutes, and The Move closed the first half with a 30-minute set. After a 20-minute interval The Nice were next, followed by Pink Floyd, with 15 minutes each. Hendrix closed the show, with an incendiary 40-minute performance.

It didn't give the bands much time to prove themselves but it was good promotion, as The Move's manager Tony Secunda later recalled: "The idea was to cram as many bands on to the bill as possible, not simply because it made financial sense but also because it gave massive exposure to bands who might never get out there."

Speaking to many of the participants today, what's remarkable about this particular 1967 tour is just how 'nice' it all was. "The whole thing was that time of 'peace, love and brown rice, man' and all that stuff," recalls Bev Bevan, then drummer with The Move. "A lot of the guys were getting stoned. It was a very peaceful tour."

"Everybody was mucking about," recalls The Nice's Keith Emerson. "It was like a huge school trip."

A school trip with knife-throwing, instrument smashing and acid-related breakdowns, that is.

Holding the cavalcade of artists together onstage was the compere, BBC Radio One DJ Pete Drummond. Like many of the pop DJs of the time, he enjoyed a secondary income from playing records and introducing artists at festivals, all-nighters and tours such as this.

With so many change-overs, Drummond was left to fill-in between bands. "I had to stand there and say: 'It'll be a few minutes before the next band… And being here in Glasgow reminds me of the Scotsman who…' and just go into some joke. Nine times out of 10 they'd just shout out 'Fuck off!' It was no ego boost for me. Hendrix used to say: 'Did you hear me tonight? I was out the back yelling 'Fuck off!' early on!' Yeah, I heard you, Jimi. I'm getting that audience so wound up against me that you could be the shit worst player on earth and they'd love you! Roger Waters –

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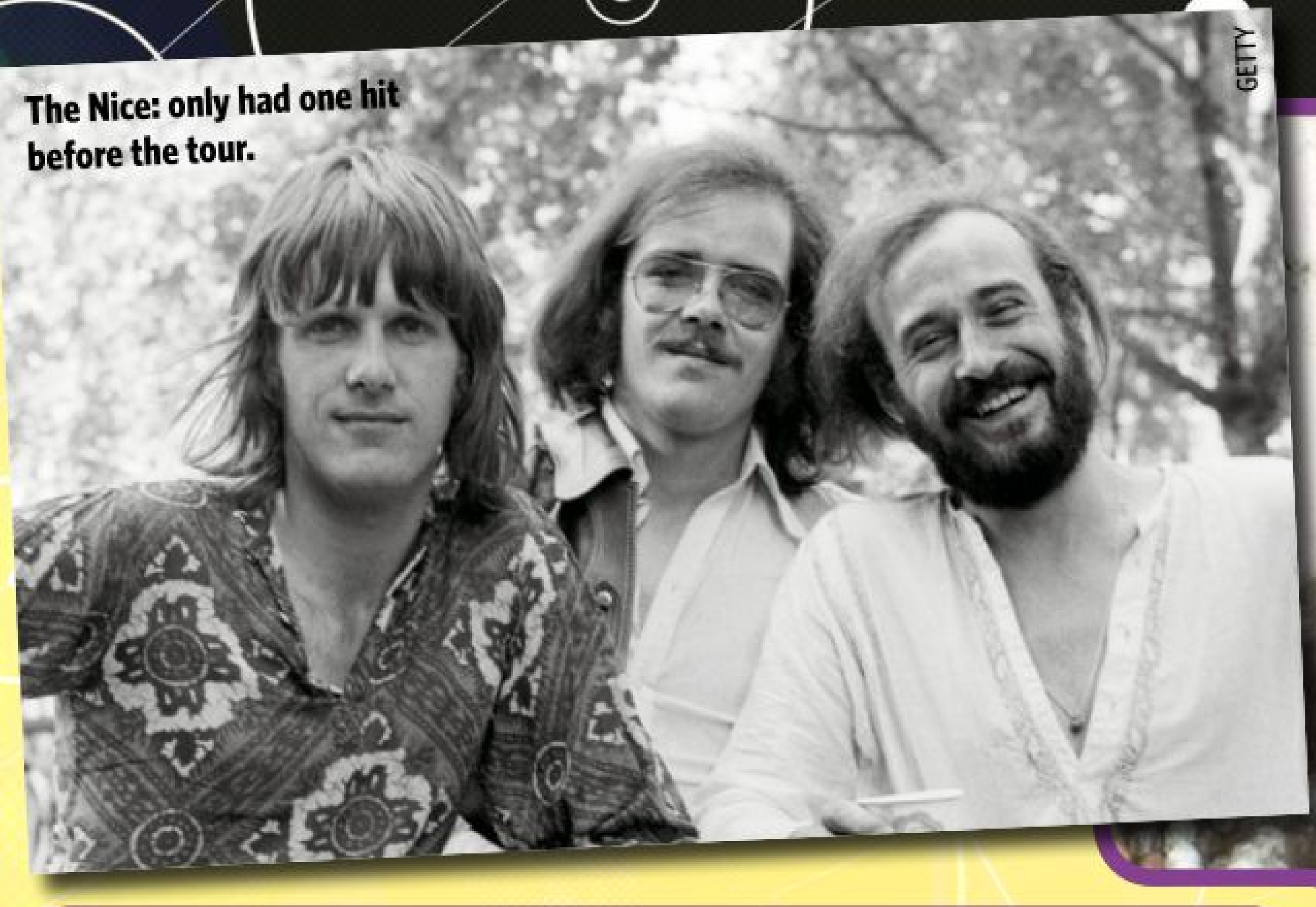

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The Nice: only had one hit before the tour.

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The Jimi Hendrix Experience: "Even Noel and Mitch didn't know what he was going to do."

AVALON

Pink Floyd: "aloof"

especially Roger – used to come up to me and say: 'I've got a good joke for you today.' I had all these salient words of jokes written on my wrist."

"It was a showcase for bands riding on Hendrix," Drummond says. "I think he got half the gate and everybody else was on fixed fees. I think [Jimi's bassist] Noel Redding and the drummer, Mitch Mitchell, were salaried. I was on £25 a night and, apart from Hendrix, I had more money than anybody. Even though [Pink Floyd] were second headliners on this tour they weren't earning the money.

I had to buy food for bands – curry and chips for the Amen Corner when we hit Cardiff. I think the Floyd earned about £20 between them per day, so they weren't that bad."

Being the opening act was never going to be an easy task for anyone, but Irish group Eire Apparent rose to the challenge. They began life in early 67 as a show-band called The People, and found themselves scratching a deadend living in Dublin, before making a break for London. There they ran into an old acquaintance from back home: the aforementioned Dave Robinson.

Eire Apparent got a gig at the UFO club in London supporting Procol Harum. They impressed Chas Chandler, the Animals bassist and manager of Jimi Hendrix and Soft Machine, to the extent that he and his business partner Mike Jeffrey were later banging on the band's dressing room door offering them a management contract.

"It was to be a joint venture then," Robinson recalls. "I was running the band but they would have 50 per cent of it, and would do the office work, the administration. So I ran around with the band on the road and they looked for the main chance for us to become big. And because of Jimi Hendrix we were able to get through a lot of doors. It was a very opportune connection."

"When you've got somebody like that behind you it's not the money, it's the upward move in the music business," remembers Eire Apparent's guitarist Henry McCullough. "We had to sit in their offices and wait for someone to give us £20 so we could go and eat. That's how well signed up we were!"

"A lot of the guys were getting stoned. A very peaceful tour…"

Bev Bevan, The Move

"That was a great apprenticeship," Robinson laughingly recalls. "Chas Chandler was very musical, being the bass player from The Animals, so I learnt a lot from him about presenting the group, live, mainly. And Mike [Jeffrey] was the very canny, very cunning manager-type person who was obviously up to no good most of the time."

For the four young lads out of Belfast it was a steep learning curve, performing alongside some of rock's royalty, and doubtless also a fast-track education in the rock-star lifestyle. "You know," says McCullough, "If you're on for 15 minutes you've got 23 hours left in your day. And with not being at home, you could end up anywhere. Not only physically, but mentally."

After the tour, Eire Apparent played a regular support to Hendrix across Europe and the US, and Jimi produced their second album, *Sunrise*. But lasting success was not to be. In 1968 McCullough was thrown out of Canada for possession of marijuana and was forced to quit the band. These days he's best remembered as a member of Joe Cocker's Grease Band and Paul McCartney's Wings. The remainder of the group failed in their attempt to re-establish themselves in the UK after such lengthy tours abroad, and split in 1969. Vocalist Ernie Graham later joined Clancy and then Help Yourself; drummer Dave Lutton played in T. Rex through the mid-70s, and bassist Chris Stewart joined US band Poco.

Probably the least well-known band on that tour of '67 were founded at Leeds University that same year. The Outer Limits were The Rolling Stones' flamboyant manager Andrew Oldham's hot new signing to his Deram/Immediate record label. Their debut single, *Just One More Chance*, was released in June, and it was probably just

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about all they had time to play in their slot. Unfortunately for them their second single, *The Great Train Robbery*, released in early 1968, was considered distasteful by the BBC, even five years after the actual event, and the band never fully recovered. (Frontman Jeff Christie did, however, find lasting fame as the composer of the song *Yellow River* which he took to Number One in the UK chart, for what seemed like forever, with his band Christie in 1970.)

If The Outer Limits had their, well, limits, arguably one of the most talented acts on the bill was the seven-piece Welsh blues-soul outfit Amen Corner. Despite having released only one single at the time of the tour, *Gin House Blues*, in the summer of 67 they were seasoned musicians, having gigged constantly throughout Britain. (Singer Andy Fairweather-Low is still gigging today, playing guitar with the likes of Eric Clapton, Bill Wyman and Roger Waters's band – a post he's held for some 22 years.)

"Our manager, Ron King, was very persuasive," Fairweather-Low remembers. "Roger Waters remembers our first meeting. He said: 'Your manager screamed at me because I shouted at one of you. Ron said: 'I'll break your fucking legs.' And, believe me, when Ron said: 'I'll break your fucking legs,' he would! It was a real possibility that it would happen. Roger remembered that. I didn't remember any of that. But that was our first introduction [to the music industry], we went straight into Don Arden and Ron King… So that, to us, was normal."

Former Amen Corner sax player Allan Jones is nowadays a tour promoter. Like many musicians, he was in awe of Hendrix. "I remember Newcastle City Hall," he says. "Jimi was very often out of tune, because he used to bash his guitar around like crazy. And he may have been a little bit out of it and didn't quite tune up his guitar properly before he went on, or whatever. And he was constantly going out of tune. This night, he was playing his Gibson Flying V, and he was so pissed off with the tuning that he actually took the guitar off his shoulder and threw it at the Marshall stack. And it fucking landed in the stack. The place just erupted and went fucking ballistic! It was a one-off. It was one of the most incredibly exciting moments I can remember."

Such wild performances put many of the other bands in the shade; for Amen Corner it became an inspiration. Halfway through the tour Amen Corner were proving so popular that, at Chas Chandler's insistence, they swapped places with The Move, so that they could close the first half of the show with their song *Otis Redding Revue*.

"Syd Barrett actually went mad on that tour."

Nick Mason, Pink Floyd

Less than two years later Amen Corner called it quits. Sax players Allan Jones and Mike Smith went on to form Judas Jump, while the rest, led by Fairweather-Low, formed the band Fair Weather. Drummer Dennis Byron and keyboard player 'Blue' Weaver later become part of The Bee Gees' band.

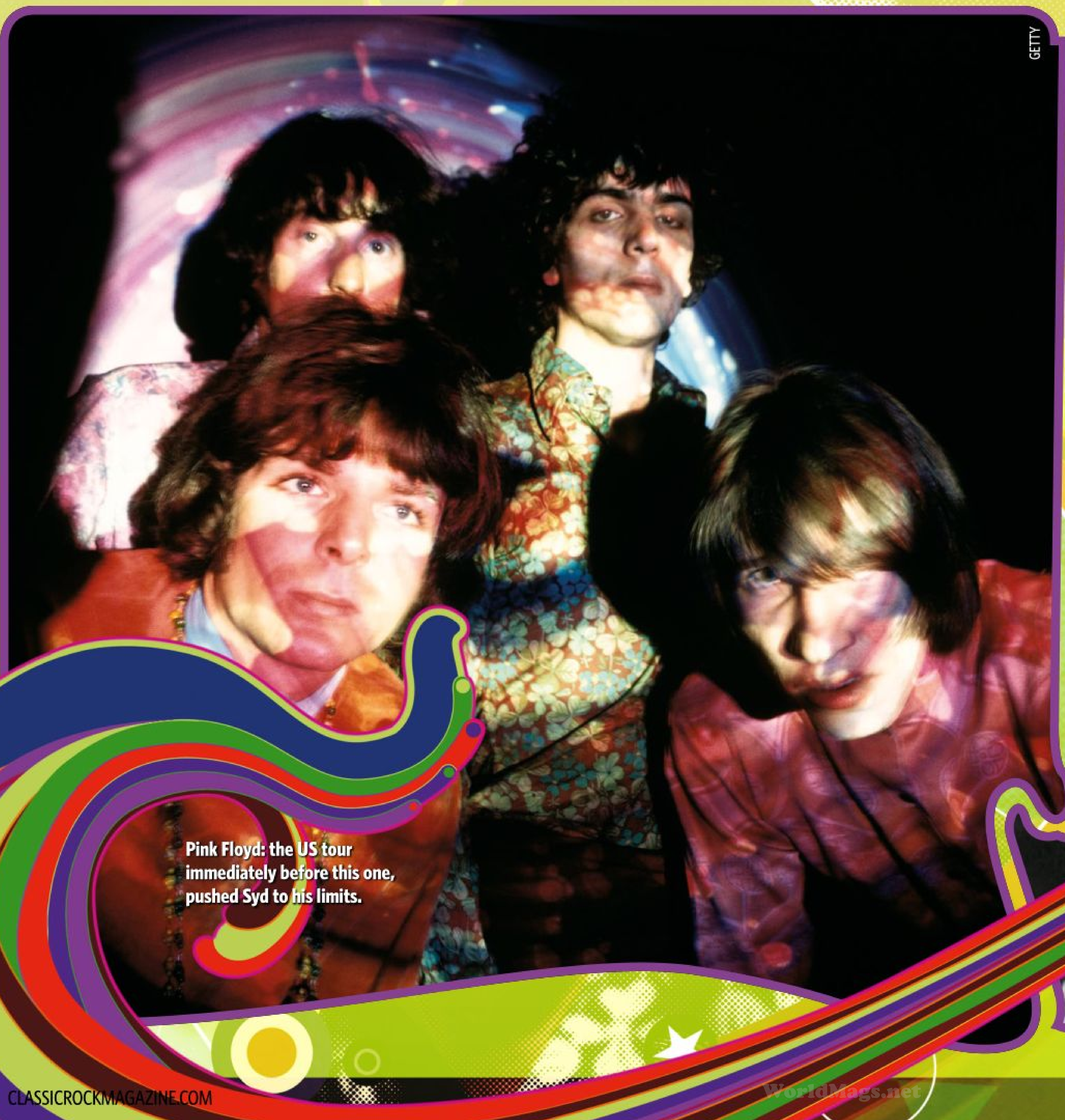
It would have been difficult not to have been aware of The Move back in the autumn of 1967. Their manager, Tony Secunda, had a fearsome reputation for publicity seeking, and made damn sure The Move were in the news at every possible opportunity. Sadly, he also didn't know when to stop.

When Secunda publicised the Move's third single, *Flowers In The Rain*, with a postcard featuring an image of the then Prime Minister Harold Wilson in bed with his secretary Marcia Williams, it resulted in a High Court ruling that all royalties from the single be paid, in perpetuity, to a charity of Wilson's choice.

The Move's troubles were compounded by the fact that they had their own version of Syd Barrett in the band in the shape of 'Ace' Kefford, their gifted bass player. His spates of crippling depression, more than likely aided by his intake of LSD in this period, began to blight his life, as it has done to this day.

That aside, there was much at stake. A friendly rivalry existed between the Jimi Hendrix Experience and The Move, and it was hard to say who was most likely to upstage who at this point. Hendrix had the passion, but The Move had scored four top 10 hits against Hendrix's three. This often led to the usual practical jokes which touring bands are prone to playing, partly to relieve the boredom of touring. "I remember The Move playing once, and I rode a bicycle across the stage," Noel Redding once recalled. "Another time we put stink bombs in Bev Bevan's bass drum pedal."

The Move also had one other trick up their sleeve: the anarchistic stage antics of Carl Wayne. At one particularly memorable show at the end of the previous year, they shared the billing with Pink Floyd and The Who. "At the Roundhouse, Carl Wayne smashed an all-American, psychedelically painted Cadillac convertible with an axe, with two strippers on the roof as he was doing it!" recalls Bev Bevan. TV sets and busts of Hitler were routinely smashed to



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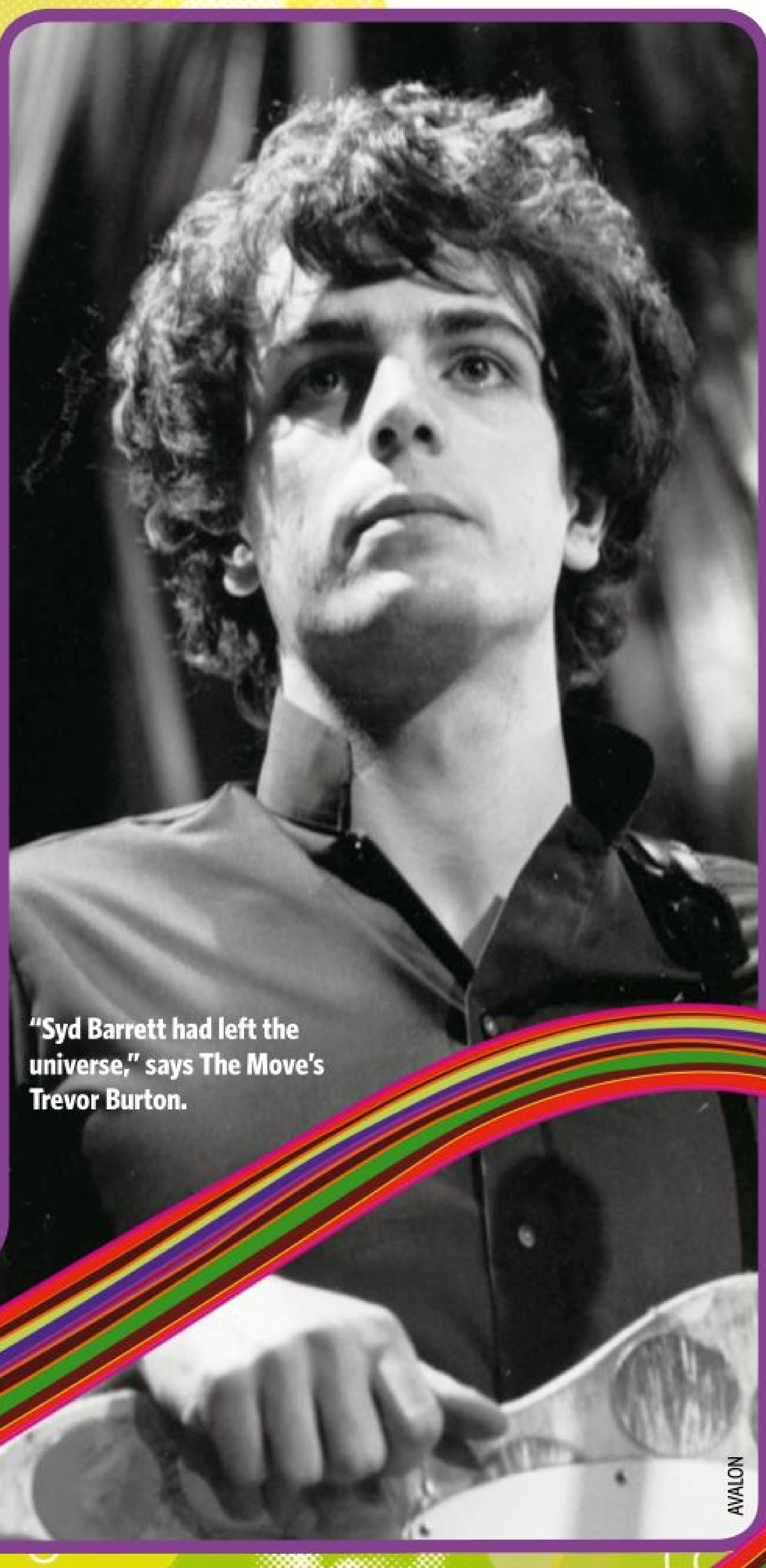
Pink Floyd: the US tour immediately before this one, pushed Syd to his limits.



"Syd Barrett had left the universe," says The Move's Trevor Burton.

AVALON

pieces as well. Unsurprisingly, The Move were kicked off a tour supporting The Walker Brothers.

Like most of the bands, The Move found a spiritual home on that legendary package tour of 1967. "It was probably the strangest and maybe the best tour I've ever been on," Bevan recalls fondly. "I think we'd stopped smashing up the TVs by then – it wasn't the right venues for that, really. We were fans of Hendrix, and Trevor [Burton, The Move's rhythm guitarist] in particular got to know him very well and went on to share a flat with Noel Redding, and I got to know Mitch [Mitchell, the Experience's drummer]. They were the most extraordinary trio to watch on stage. We used to watch them every night and say: 'You wouldn't want to follow that!'"

"What a lovely guy he was," Bevan says of Hendrix. "On stage he was this absolute animal. But off stage he was very soft-spoken, and whenever a woman would walk into the room he would stand up and offer his chair. He had lovely manner, and not what you'd expect at all."

Trevor Burton had the time of his life. "It was insane! Insanity!" He laughs enthusiastically. "There was a coach but The Move and Jimi Hendrix had their own transport. I travelled mostly with Jimi on that tour because The Move used to go home every night, wherever they were, because they all had girlfriends. I didn't, so I travelled with Jimi most of the time. It was great. Pretty stoned!"

"The Move were very funny," Dave Robinson recalls. "I remember a situation at soundcheck and overhearing Carl Wayne talking. He'd turned up late to the soundcheck because he'd been having his venereal warts removed!"

The Move fragmented in the early 1970s, initially with the departure of Trevor Burton and Carl Wayne who followed soon afterwards. Roy Wood formed Wizzard in the 1972 while at a the same time he and Bev Bevan enjoyed a phenomenal amount of success with the Electric Light Orchestra.

Amen Corner: their popularity pushed them up the bill as the tour went on.

GAB ARCHIVES/REDFERNS

Like many of their tour-mates The Nice were relative newcomers, barely four months into their solo career (they had originally been formed as singer PP Arnold's backing band) and with just one hit single to their name. Despite their lack of recorded output, The Nice had already garnered a wealth of rave reviews following their anarchistic take on prog rock, classical and jazz improvisations.

While The Move had by then toned down their onstage antics, The Nice's keyboard player, Keith Emerson, was building his up. The audience was going to get a hell of show. "He was the only stand-up organist doing wild things with his organ as Pete Townshend and Jimi did with their guitars," says The Nice's guitarist Davy O'List. "Our audiences went wild. I wore a velvet bell jacket I had designed, reminiscent of a jester, and I lent Keith a whip to whip his organ with; bells, doves and whips coming out and flying about in red smoke." Emerson also had a routine of throwing knives at his Hammond organ and wedging them between the keys to sustain the notes. "First it was going to be swords but they were too big to handle," muses O'List.

In the days before Motörhead, Lemmy Kilmister worked as a roadie for The Nice. When the package tour came around he was snapped up by Hendrix and earned a handsome £10 a night for humping his gear on and off stage. Dave Robinson remembers Lemmy well. "He did no work at all!" he exclaims. "I got to do quite a bit of his work for Jimi, because [Lemmy] was very busy signing autographs and swanning about outside with the girls. He'd been in a band called the Rocking Vicars and they were quite famous in the north of England, so he spent a lot of time swanning around and did absolutely… nothing!"

"The thing I remember about Lemmy," Keith Emerson recalls, "Is that when I started using knives he said: 'Well if you're going to use knives, use a real one,' and he gave me a Hitler Youth dagger."

Emerson also recalls one particular night that the knife-throwing could have ended in tragedy: "Jimi Hendrix had bought one of the first home movie cameras. During The Nice's act, particularly in *Rondo*, I remember I'd stuck knives into the keyboard and was in the process of throwing them towards the two speakers when, in between the two speakers was Jimi. He's got his camera and he's filming me, and I kind of froze mid-throw, so to speak. And Jimi had his tongue out, and was beckoning me to actually throw them at the speakers while he was in the middle, while he filmed it. I thought: 'I don't want to be the one that puts him in the history books!'"

O'List quit The Nice in mid-1968, and played briefly with Jethro Tull, early Roxy Music and then Jet. The Nice played their last show in 1970. Bassist Lee Jackson formed Jackson Heights, after which he reunited with drummer Brian Davison to form Refugee. Keith Emerson enjoyed phenomenal success, of course, with prog-rock supergroup Emerson, Lake And Palmer.

Quite how Pink Floyd talked their way onto the bill is anyone's guess. Their leader, Syd Barrett, was slowly but surely undermining everything the band had strived to achieve over the previous year. The endless touring, the photo shoots, interviews, radio and TV sessions would all be for nothing as it became increasingly obvious that the band's chief songwriter just couldn't cope an thanks mostly to having acquired a taste for

Despite a period of recuperation for him t August, the relentless touring frayed both Ba fragile state of mind and his bandmates' tem equal measure. On a US promotional tour ju weeks prior to the start of the Hendrix tour, t well and truly screwed up three high-profile Hollywood TV appearances, rubbed legenda Francisco promoter Bill Graham up the wro and in the process reduced the MD of their r label in Los Angeles to tears.

"Detuning his guitar all the way through c number, striking the strings. He more or less ceased playing and stood there, leaving us to along as best we could," said Floyd drumme Mason. "Syd actually went mad on that first American tour. He didn't know where he wa the time. I remember he detuned his guitar c Venice, Los Angeles, and just stood there ratt strings, which was a bit weird, even for us. A time he emptied a can of Brylcreem on his h because he didn't like his curly hair."

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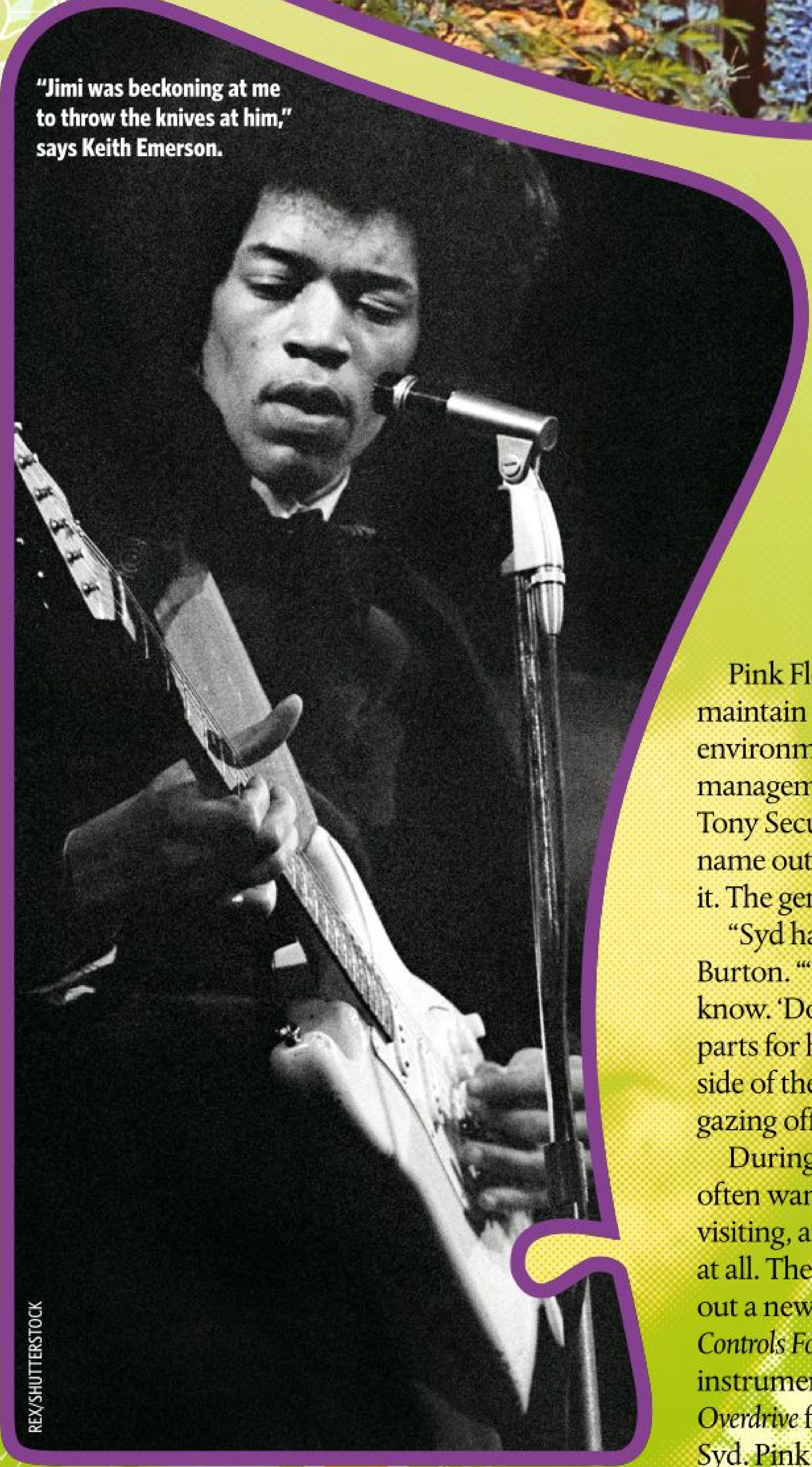
The Move had their own version of Syd Barrett in the shape of acid-head bassist 'Ace' Kefford.

GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS



"Jimi was beckoning at me to throw the knives at him," says Keith Emerson.

REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

"Floyd were arty students – we were hardened rockers."

Trevor Burton, The Move

Pink Floyd desperately needed this tour in order to maintain their profile in an increasingly difficult environment. "Basically, they [Pink Floyd's management] were worried about Syd Barrett," said Tony Secunda, "But we needed to keep the band's name out there, but nobody knew if Barrett was up to it. The general feeling was that he wasn't."

"Syd had left the universe," says The Move's Trevor Burton. "'Put a mark on stage for him to stand', you know. 'Don't move!' Henry McCullough used to do parts for him," Burton laughs. He'd be standing on the side of the stage doing Syd's parts while Syd was gazing off into the distance."

During the course of the 67 tour Barrett would often wander aimlessly around the town they were visiting, and either stand onstage limply or not appear at all. The opt-out clause for Pink Floyd was to string out a new Roger Waters composition called *Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun*, or perform instrumentals such as *Pow R Toc H* or *Interstellar Overdrive* from their debut album, with or without Syd. Pink Floyd's light show was also an asset – it was something they could hide behind.

Secretly the band were already thinking of how to replace him. And The Nice guitarist Davy O'List looked a very likely candidate. "I'd watch them every night and I learned their songs," O'List says. "One night I stood in the wings so they could see me enjoying the music. Syd went off on a walk one night and didn't come back. I knew their music and I said I could perform it well, so they asked me on."

It may have been an audition of sorts, but Pink Floyd soldiered on regardless. Their third single, *Apples And Oranges*, was released on November 17, early in the tour, but it failed to make any ground on the UK chart – which is as a good an indicator as any of the impact their set was having on audiences.

Barrett continued his downward spiral and almost consigned the band to the dustbin of history with his wayward antics. Had it not been for Roger Waters taking the lead after the '67 tour it could well have been the end of Pink Floyd.

"To be honest with you, the Floyd were very aloof," says Amen Corner's Allan Jones, "Very much into

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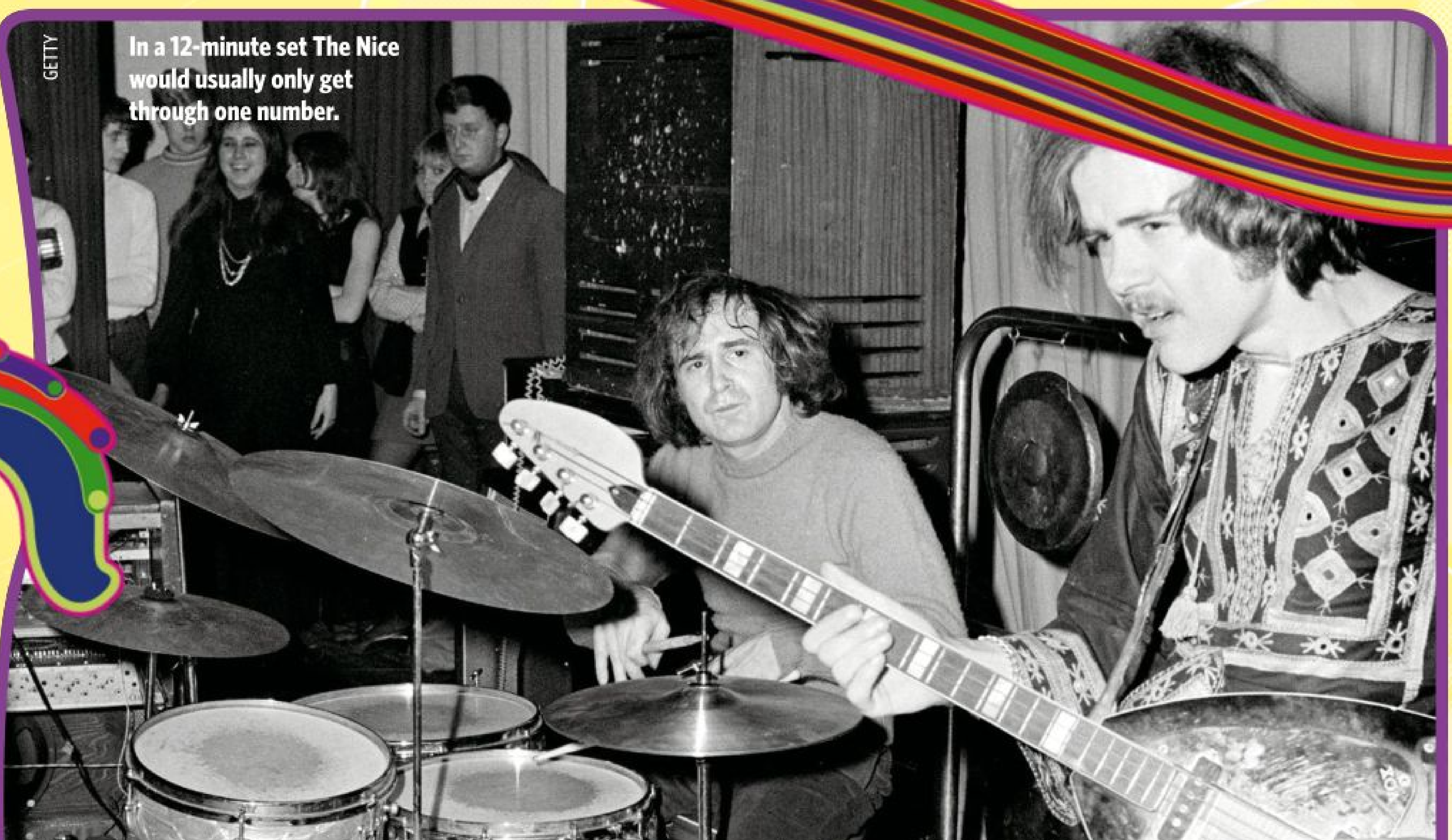

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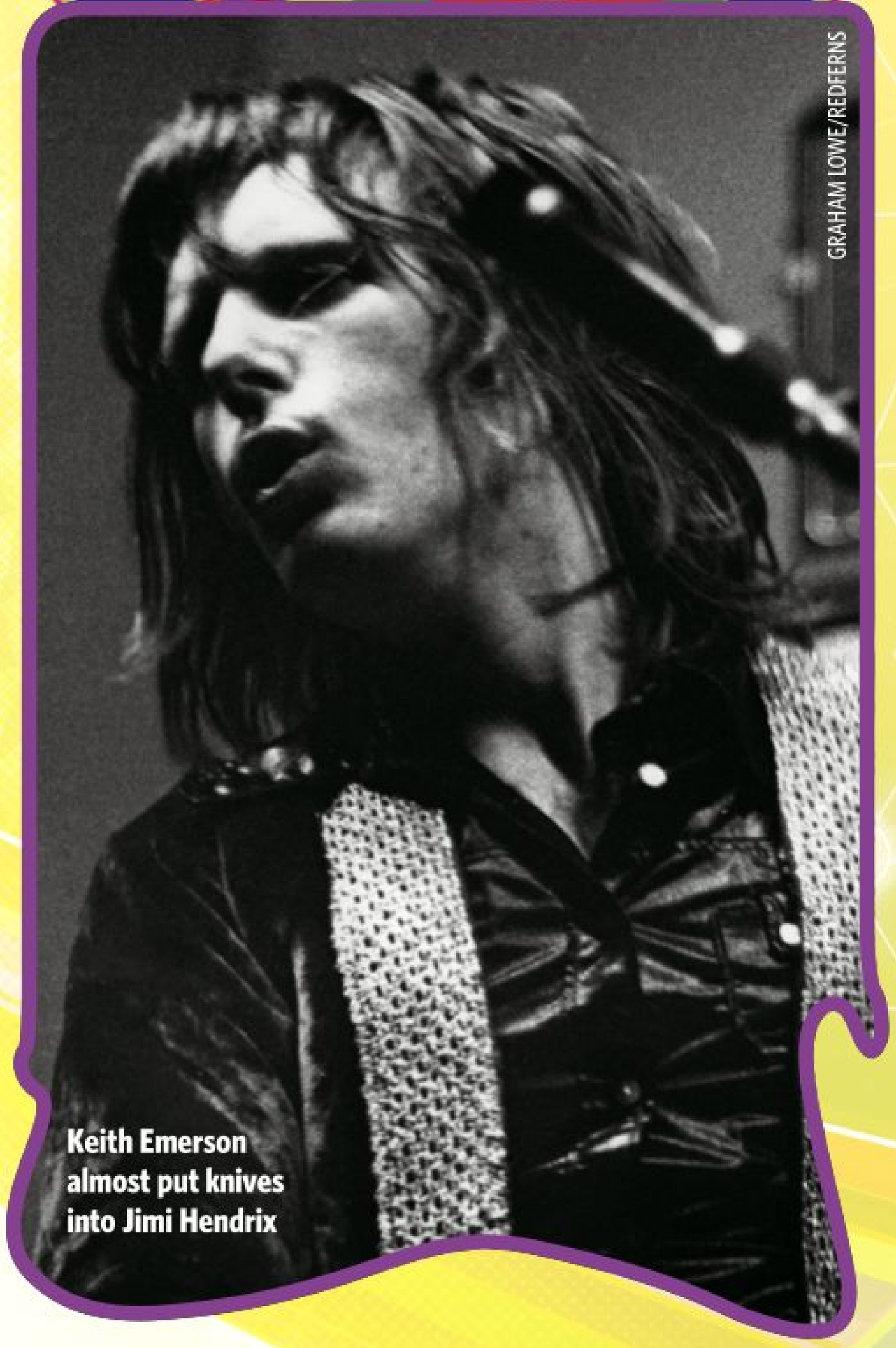
In a 12-minute set The Nice would usually only get through one number.



GRAHAM LOWE/REDFERNS

Keith Emerson almost put knives into Jimi Hendrix

HAROLD DAVISON AND TITO BURNS PRESENT

JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

THE MOVE

PINK FLOYD

OUTER LIMITS

PETE DRUMMOND

THE NICE

EIRE APPARENT

AMEN CORNER

NOVEMBER
TUES 14th LONDON ROYAL ALBERT HALL AT 8.00
WED 15th BOURNEMOUTH WINTER GARDENS AT 6.10 & 8.30
FRI 17th SHEFFIELD CITY HALL AT 6.20 & 8.50
SAT 18th LIVERPOOL EMPIRE THEATRE AT 6.15 & 8.35
SUN 19th COVENTRY COVENTRY THEATRE AT 6.00 & 8.30
WED 22nd PORTSMOUTH GUILD HALL AT 6.30 & 8.50
THUR 23rd CARDIFF SOPHIA GARDENS AT 6.15 & 8.35
FRI 24th BRISTOL COLSTON HALL AT 6.30 & 8.45
SAT 25th BLACKPOOL OPERA HOUSE AT 6.10 & 8.30
SUN 26th MANCHESTER PALACE THEATRE AT 6.00 & 8.15
DECEMBER
FRI 1st CHATHAM TOWN HALL AT 6.15 & 8.45
SAT 2nd BRIGHTON THE DOME AT 6.15 & 8.40
SUN 3rd NOTTINGHAM THEATRE ROYAL AT 5.30 & 8.00
MON 4th NEWCASTLE CITY HALL AT 6.15 & 8.30
TUES 5th GLASGOW GREEN'S PLAYHOUSE AT 6.15 & 8.45

their own thing. And at the time, I have to say I wasn't that impressed with them. They never seemed to be in tune and it was all very disjointed. It didn't really do anything for me live, but I still really loved the singles."

Andy Fairweather-Low agrees: "You know, 'aloof' and 'insular' are two very good descriptive words of how we felt about them, then. What they thought about us I haven't got a bloody clue! And Syd I remember as being not really part of the team. We all travelled – well the majority travelled – on one big bus. The Floyd travelled separately. And I think they travelled separately themselves too. I don't think there was any great bonding going on there."

"The Floyd didn't mix at all, with anybody," says Burton. "They were all like arty student types and we were fucking hardened rockers, you know, and they kept themselves to themselves. Noel and me quite often would go into their dressing rooms and try and communicate, but it didn't work very often."

"They weren't inclined to socialise," confirms Keith Emerson. "I do recall one moment on the tour of overhearing Roger Waters ask the rest of the band: 'Well, when is it your turn in the studio?' And I asked Roger: 'What? You don't all go in the studio together?' And he said: 'Oh, no, no, no. If we go in separately it avoids arguments.'"

Syd Barrett's time in Pink Floyd was all but over by the conclusion of the tour. He was replaced by David Gilmour in early 1968.

Within mere weeks of his arrival in London, Jimi Hendrix's legend was secured. Here was a guitar player that turned the world of rock music on its head and left contemporaries Pete Townshend and Eric Clapton weeping in disbelief at his virtuoso skill.

Despite his 1966 Top 10 hit *Hey Joe*, Hendrix was still largely unknown in the provinces before this tour hit the road, having played very little in his own right outside of London up until then. Something of a misjudgement had also put him on a package tour in early 67, coincidentally also organised by Tito Burns, that placed him alongside The Walker Brothers, Engelbert Humperdinck and Cat Stevens. Needless to say, it was completely the wrong audience. A series of patchy regional club gigs followed but Hendrix was yet to achieve widespread fame.

That, however, changed very rapidly. With the release of two further singles – *Purple Haze* in March and *The Wind Cries Mary* in May – Jimi was rapidly building up momentum. In the months that followed he steadily increased his international following, first in the US and then in Europe. He had turned in an explosive set at the Monterey Pop festival in June that left his co-stars The Who (and most of the audience) completely dumbfounded. It left The Who with little option but to end with a demolition finalé.

Come the tour, Hendrix did not disappoint. A sold-out Royal Albert Hall felt the full force of his set as the Experience powered through *Foxy Lady*, *Fire* and *The Burning Of The Midnight Lamp*. A preview of the yet to be released *Spanish Castle Magic* was followed by the brief respite of *The Wind Cries Mary*, and the band ended their set with a ferocious *Purple Haze*. This was Hendrix, Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell at their best: a short, snappy, blazing set – a power trio with the world at their feet.

Keith Emerson was blown away: "Everybody involved in the tour, they'd all come back in the wings and watch him because every night he played he'd do something completely different. And a lot of times he astounded Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell, because they didn't always know what he was going to do. He was certainly trashing a lot of speakers. I remember him playing the Flying V guitar for the first time, and he threw it and it actually landed like an arrow into the speaker cabinet, and us backstage watching from the wings were just completely, 'Wow!'"

Hendrix may have been the wild man of rock but he also showed incredible humour and patience for less-than-grateful fans. Keith Emerson recalls a night in Bristol: "At the end of the show I remember a lot of the fans managed to get backstage – the security wasn't very good at all – and they crashed into our dressing room with their autograph books. And of course we were very disturbed about having our privacy invaded like that. I think The Move decided to sign, and then the fans wanted everybody's autograph. And on the way out one of the autograph hunters turned to Jimi and said very loudly, so that we all heard: 'I think Eric Clapton is much better than you.' There was a kind of hushed silence that went over the dressing room. Then Jimi turned back and said quite politely: 'Well, I think Eric's a far better guitar player too.'"

Emerson also recalls the only time there were any bad vibes on the entire tour. "Jimi went a little bit wild swinging his guitar around and he actually managed to hit Mitch Mitchell's bass drum," he says. "Mitch protected his drum set like it was gold, and he was pretty much crying after the show, going: 'You shouldn't have done that! You've got no respect for my drums!' He was really distraught."

The end of the tour also marked the end of an era. The 67 tour is widely regarded as the last of the great pop-rock package tours; a phenomenon that was unique to the times. A decade afterward, Dave Robinson recognised the strength of the format, and modelled the inaugural 1977 Stiff Records package tour on that 67 tour. For a while after this, the idea remained largely forgotten, but it has resurfaced and yet again proved that it has a unique and enduring appeal. The annual travelling musical extravaganzas such as Lollapolooza and Ozzfest, and-one off tours like the recent Alice Cooper/Motörhead/Joan Jett package, can all trace their invention right the way back to the Hendrix package tour of November 1967. Wonder if Lemmy's still carrying his knife…

• *Thanks to Allan Jones, Andy Fairweather-Low, Bev Bevan, Trevor Burton, Henry McCullough, Keith Emerson, Davy O'List, Keith Altham and Dave Robinson.*

The Rolling Stones

★ Gimme Shelter

Written at a time of doom and gloom, recorded during testing times, *Let It Bleed*'s opening track captured the death of the 60s, when peace'n'love tuned to rape and murder…

Words: **Mick Wall**

"You get lucky sometimes," Keith Richards says of *Gimme Shelter*, the greatest song he ever wrote. "It was a shitty day. I had nothing better to do."

The tone is lightweight, almost laughable. Yet the song was wrought from the heaviest of materials. The Rolling Stones were still trying to climb out of the career-grave that their critically derided 1967 album *Their Satanic Majesties Request* had left them in, their plans persistently thwarted by the rapidly disintegrating physical and emotional state of their other founder-member guitarist, Brian Jones.

Their 1968 follow-up, *Beggars Banquet*, recorded largely with just Keith on guitar, had been a classic, but their final hit with Jones, *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, had been their only chart single in the UK for 18 months. Now with Keith's old lady – Anita Pallenberg, stolen from Jones the year before – filming sex scenes with Mick Jagger for his movie debut in *Performance*, Keith's mind was all doom and gloom as he sat snorting coke and heroin at gallery owner Robert Fraser's Mayfair apartment one stormy day that autumn.

Lounging with his guitar in a room decorated with Tibetan skulls, tantric art and Moroccan tapestries, chain-smoking and depressed at the thought of Anita being with Mick, Keith began to strum as lightning flashed across the London sky.

"It was just a terrible fucking day," he recalls in his memoir, *Life*, "this incredible storm over London. So I got into that mode – looking at all these people… running like hell."

Leaning on the same open chords that had become his signature, he crooned, '*Oh, a storm is threatening, my very life today*.' Sounded good. He continued to strum, added another line: '*If I don't get some shelter, oh yeah, I'm gonna fade away…*'

Six months later, when the Stones reconvened to begin work on their next album, *Let It Bleed*, the song of ultimate doom Keith had begun that stormy day, now titled *Gimme Shelter*, was among the first he and Jagger began working on with producer Jimmy Miller.

There were other monumental moments on the album to come, not least Jagger's *You Can't Always Get What You Want*. But everything the Stones would become, everything they would be glorified as – the greatest, most legendary, most daring and sophisticated and dark and evil and sexy and cool rock'n'roll band in the world – would be summed up by the apocalyptic *Gimme Shelter*, the album's opening track.

It would be another six months, though, before they'd finished with it. In the meantime the Stones went through the most turbulent period – artistically, personally, commercially – of their career.

After Jones, who had officially been ousted from the group in June '69, was found dead in his swimming pool just three weeks later, the Stones went ahead with their planned free concert in Hyde Park, with new guitarist Mick Taylor.

They also announced their first US tour for three years, due to start in November. First though, they had to complete the album.

Miller argued there was something missing from *Gimme Shelter*, something that would turn good into great.

They found what they were looking for in 20-year-old Merry Clayton. Suggested by producer and long-time Stones acolyte Jack Nitzsche, Clayton had made her name through duets and backing vocals for Ray Charles, Burt Bacharach and Elvis Presley, among many others.

She laughingly recalls how she was about to go to bed when she got Nitzsche's call: "It was almost midnight. I was pregnant at the time and I thought, there's no way in the world I'm getting out of bed to go down to some studio in the middle of the night."

But her husband, jazz saxophonist Curtis Amy, talked her into it.

"I'm wearing these beautiful pink pyjamas, my hair was up in rollers. But I took this Chanel scarf, wrapped it round the rollers so it looked really cute, went to the bathroom and put on a little lip blush – 'cos there's no way I'm going to the studio other than beautiful!"

Throwing a fur coat around her shoulders, she turned up at the studio "ready to work". She admits to being somewhat nonplussed when she read the lyrics Jagger handed to her.

"I'm like, '*Rape, murder*…'? You sure that's what you want me to sing, honey? He's just laughing. Him and Keith."

They began the session, and the effect was instant. "You listen to the original tape you can hear Mick whooping and hollering in the background," Merry says.

Of course, there would be a grim postscript to the story of *Gimme Shelter*. While it became the most praised album-only track in the Stones canon – "The cleverest amalgam of powerful sounds the Stones have yet created," reckoned *International Times*; "Ecstatic, ironic, all-powerful, an erotic exorcism for a doomed decade," claimed *Newsweek* – it also became the emblem of the moment when the 60s dream flared into the 70s nightmare.

Released on the same day in December 1969 as the Stones' ill-starred, bad-acid-and-cheap-wine appearance at Altamont Speedway in northern California, at which teenager Meredith Hunter was stabbed to death by Hells Angels, *Gimme Shelter* would also become the all-too appropriate title of the Maysles brothers' documentary film of that debacle: the moment when the Stones' music seemed to become a mythic force unto itself. Or as Albert Goldman put it: "An obsessively lovely specimen of tribal rock… rainmaking music [repeating] over an endless drone until it has soaked its way through your soul." ❼

"They hand me the lyrics, and I'm looking, thinking, 'Rape? Murder? I'm working with a bunch of fools!'"

FOOLS' GOLD

"They hand me the lyrics, and I'm looking, thinking, 'Rape? Murder? I'm working with a bunch of fools!'"

Less a backing singer on *Gimme Shelter*, she was virtually a co-singer with Jagger.

"I remember saying to the boys [Jagger and Richards]: 'I hope this don't take all night, 'cos I gotta get my beauty sleep,'" she chuckles now. "But that song became the start of a whole new thing for me."

Indeed, the 70s found Merry supplying vocals for Lynyrd Skynyrd (*Sweet Home Alabama*), The Who (as the Acid Queen in the original 1972 stage production of *Tommy*), Neil Young and countless others. But *Gimme Shelter* became Merry's signature tune and the title of her 1970 debut solo album.

Currently, Merry Clayton can be seen telling – and singing – her story in the documentary movie *20 Feet From Stardom*, in which she and several other noted backing singers reveal the stories behind a lifetime of classic songs. "Honey, we saw it all," she purrs. "Only we were never supposed to tell about it – until now!"

REX

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The Rolling Stones: came up with one of their best tracks during one of their most testing times.

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
December 6, 1969, on the album *Let It Bleed*

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
Not released as a single

PERSONNEL
Mick Jagger
Vocals, harmonica
Keith Richards
Guitars, backing vocals
Bill Wyman
Bass
Charlie Watts
Drums
Nicky Hopkins
Piano
Jimmy Miller
Percussion
Merry Clayton
Vocals

WRITTEN BY
Mick Jagger/ Keith Richards

PRODUCER
Jimmy Miller

LABEL
Decca

In 2013, **Gail** and **Dweezil Zappa** looked back on the life and legacy of the musician/composer whose recordings embraced the avant-garde while paying homage to early rock'n'roll, mocking the mainstream while indulging in his own scatological silliness.

Man with a reason: **Sid Smith**

Moon Unit Zappa (L) and her mother, Gail, attend the Who Shot Rock & Roll opening night, June 2012. Photography on June 21, 2012

LESTER COHEN/WIREIMAGE/GETTY

Over a bowl of brown rice, John Lennon and Tony Palmer are enjoying a bit of a natter and a catch-up. The pair had first met back in 1963 when Palmer, as a reporter for the Cambridge University magazine, interviewed the Fab Four when they were playing the city. Lennon had been keen to have a look around the place, but of course Beatlemania precluded such a walkabout. Donning a disguise, the incognito Beatle was shown around Cambridge's architectural delights by a delighted Palmer. Before rejoining his bandmates, Lennon handed the Moral Sciences student a piece of paper with a telephone number on it, saying, "If you're ever in London give me a call."

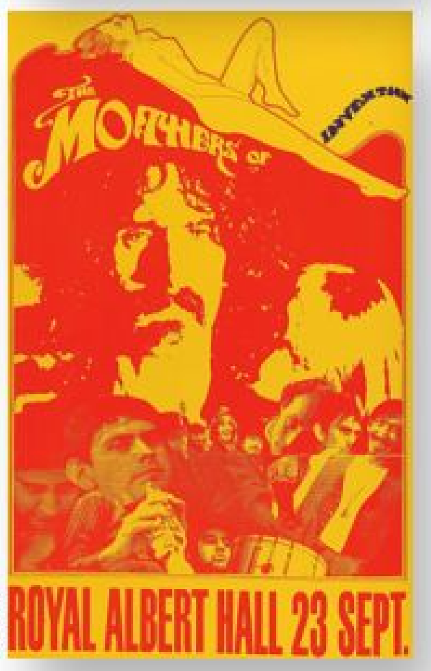
Spooling forward to 1967, Palmer, now an up-and-coming director at the BBC, called the number and, much to his surprise, Lennon arranged a date for dinner. As they ate, Lennon leaned forward conspiratorially: "Now that you're making TV programmes it's your *duty* to make a show about all the musicians who either can't get onto the BBC or don't want to do *Juke Box Jury* or *Top Of The Pops*." He handed Palmer another piece of paper. This time there was a list of names and at the top of it was Frank Zappa.

Aired on the BBC in 1968, the resulting documentary, *All My Loving*, was one of the first credible attempts to examine pop music as a means of social commentary and a vehicle for opposition to the political orthodoxies of the day. Palmer, who later worked with Zappa on the movie version of *200 Motels*, thought him one of the most intelligent and articulate rock musicians he'd come across. It's tempting to view the bands participating in the documentary as all being part of some liberal consensus about the ills of the day and the potential solutions. Yet even at this relatively early stage in his career, Zappa was largely removed from contemporaries such as The Beatles, Cream, The Who, et al, both musically and politically. A famous contrarian, Zappa was utterly scathing of the Summer Of Love, the corporate manipulation of youth and the manifestations of 'hippie', the so-called alternative culture that proliferated at the time, viewing it as plastic and self-serving. "Pop music is sitting there pretending it's going to grow and any minute going to turn into something," he scornfully told the press in 1967, the same year he recorded *Who Needs The Peace Corps?*, his scorching satire on the scene and the drug culture in general: *'Every town must have a place / Where phony hippies meet / Psychedelic dungeons / Popping up on every street / GO TO SAN FRANCISCO…'*

In the 20 years that have passed since his death from prostate cancer in 1993, interest in Zappa's music has never been higher, resonating just as much as it did in his lifetime thanks to an ongoing series of back-catalogue reissues and a steady release of archive material directly from his family's extensive vaults. Since 2006, his son, Dweezil, has fronted Zappa Plays Zappa, touring extensively with a mission to bring his father's music not only to die-hard fans but to a new generation of younger listeners. In 2012, there were large-scale orchestral presentations of *200 Motels* on both sides of the Atlantic. And in an irony Zappa himself would have relished, an orchestral score of his was performed at this year's Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, the same venue which banned him in 1971, on the grounds that his ▷

We're Only In It For The Money*, which featured *Who Needs The Peace Corps?

GETTY



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200 Motels and RAH concert posters.

Frank Zappa plays drums with his first band, The Blackouts, circa 1957 in Lancaster, California.

GETTY

“People often ask me well what did Frank and I talk about, and I guarantee you the word ‘mortgage’ never came up.”

Gail Zappa

FRANK ZAPPA:

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

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Zappa with parents (l-r) Francis and Rosemary in Frank's home, Los Angeles, California, 1970.

Frank on stage with Pink Floyd in Belgium, 1969.

graphic brand of rock'n'roll was an affront to taste and decency.

"The fact that Frank is described as a rock'n'roll artist is about as Dada as you could get," argues his widow, Gail Zappa. "There was no other classification for what he did at the time he emerged so that's what they called him. If you look at what he did in rock'n'roll and you compare that with his orchestral music, you'll find the same kinds of changes, the same kinds of experimental versions of what is possible with an orchestra and what is happening with rock'n'roll instrumentation. For Frank there was no difference. He used the same compositional technique throughout."

Life-changing events come in all shapes and sizes, and usually from unexpected sources. For the teenage Frank in mid-1950s California, it was the day he haggled with a record-store owner for an album by Edgard Varèse, containing the composition *Ionisation*. Zappa had previously read about the piece in a magazine and was intrigued. *The New Yorker*'s Alex Ross described Varèse and other ultra-modernist composers of the day as pursuing a kind of "radical dissonance", quoting Varèse as saying he wasn't searching for the Holy Grail so much as "the bomb that would make the musical world explode and thereby let in all sounds, sounds which up to now – and even today – have been called noises". The particular bomb that exploded Frank's world, which up to then had included a love of rhythm and blues and some early school-dance gigs as a drummer, threw him into an odd and abrasive percussive landscape. Strange and alien, he was utterly transfixed by the indefinable timbre and texture within the piece. As perplexing as it was, it was also an environment in which he felt at home, where he knew he belonged. Zappa recounted that, for months on end, *Ionisation* held him spellbound. Hijacking the family's record player, he obsessively immersed himself in Varèse's world while his mother, as he put it, "looked at me like I was out of my fucking mind."

There's a picture from 1970 of Zappa and his parents, Francis and Rosemary, posed for an edition of *Life Magazine* (above) Of Sicilian/Italian descent, they sit on a sofa in Zappa's plush LA home, looking out of place next to their now-famous son, who stands apart. Even allowing for the artificiality, it expresses a distance between parents and celebrated offspring. "I would not say that they were close," says Gail Zappa, who married Frank in 1967. "I think on the one hand you have a very strong Sicilian sensibility culturally surrounding Frank's father, whose whole background was being involved with people that were Sicilian or Italian. Frank grew up in that world but… I don't think he was in synch with a certain kind of culture that's very drawn from tradition. Frank *knew* from a very early age and he just wasn't going to buy into any of these concepts. Even when he was nine, he'd already invented a way of expressing himself that he was very comfortable with. It didn't matter what other people thought, he was going to go ahead and do his own thing."

"When I did hear other people's music for the first time, I thought, 'Where's the rest of it? Where are all the other instruments? Where's all the detail?'"

Dweezil Zappa

She suspects that, though his parents didn't know what to make of his success and notoriety, Frank probably got his penchant for marketing from his father "I remember once when Frank gave the family car back to his parents so his brother could have it, his father tried to sell the car as 'formerly driven by Frank Zappa'. What they got for it, I have no idea," she guffaws.

There's a deep irony in the way Zappa has been placed as an icon of stoner culture, something which in practice he despised. It irritated Frank during his lifetime and rankles his son, Dweezil, today. "*Rolling Stone* not so long ago printed an illustration of Frank with a lit joint. Now, he was clearly not a guy who was involved in drugs. He was always telling people not to do drugs. So they print some stupid thing like that. Clearly they had to make a drawing of it because no such photo like that would ever exist. It's just dumb. Like they're trying to perpetuate this myth. It's real easy for people who don't know anything about his music to just say, 'he's the wacky guy with the kids with the wacky names, and he must have been on drugs…' but it's just irresponsible of *Rolling Stone* to perpetuate that myth when the truth is exactly the opposite."

One imagines that, for such an incredibly driven individual, working and touring more or less fulltime must have taken a toll

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PHOTOSHOT

The Mothers Of Invention at the Whisky A Go-Go: performing at the Sunset Strip club earned them their first record contract.

GETTY

on family life. "What is a normal family life? I don't know how to say, 'What normal life?'" offers Gail. "The closest I can get to explaining that is that people often ask me, well, what did Frank and I talk about, and I guarantee you the word 'mortgage' never came up."

Dweezil, born in 1969, when Frank recorded the landmark *Hot Rats*, confirms his father was exceptionally driven. "As an 11-year-old kid he went to the library and he decided he wanted to become a composer and he taught himself everything about writing music from reading books. He didn't have formal training as a composer or conductor, so he taught himself in his own auto-didactic style. Throughout his life he was certainly a busy guy but you have to try to imagine how somebody can make 80 albums in less than 40 years and have the kind of variety of music that's written on there," says Dweezil. "He still had the ability to focus on things and adapt to life as a father, so it's not like we didn't get any time with him whatsoever. Every family has their own sense of what's normal, so for us… we didn't have that celebrity privileged lifestyle. It wasn't anything like that. Even then, when Frank was still touring and making records, it wasn't like he was this massively well-known celebrity."

"There are no ex-Zappa fans. Once you get it, you're in for the duration."

Gail Zappa

GETTY

Frank and his wife Gail pose for a photoshoot for the cover of *Absolutely Free* at home in 1967.

Exposure to Frank's unconventional music from an early age undoubtedly impacted on Dweezil's own musical tastes. "When I grew up listening only to my dad's music as a kid, I didn't really hear anything else from the radio until I was probably about 11 or 12 years old. Then when I did hear that other stuff, my first thought was, 'Where's the rest of it? Where are all the other instruments? Where's all the detail?'"

Attention to detail very much exercised the composer. There are stories attesting to how, in his quest for perfection, he could rub people up the wrong way. Not known to suffer fools gladly, was he a hard man to please? "Not necessarily, but he knew what was possible and when people were cutting corners or not giving their best effort then he'd be disappointed or frustrated," argues Dweezil.

The range of Zappa's output is breathtaking and sometimes bafflingly diverse. There's Zappa the doo-wop singer; the contemporary classical composer; the jazz-rock maestro; the avant-garde modernista; the blues player par excellence; the full-on satirist; the rock guitarist's guitarist; the purveyor of knockabout adolescent silliness and forensically detailed pastiche, as well as sounds and styles which resist easy categorisation. Were his back catalogue to lie on the psychiatrist's couch, it would be easy to conclude with a diagnosis of multiple personality. Yet as contrasting and cussedly awkward as a lot of it is, it doesn't sound like anyone else. Though some of the subject matter and humour has dated, the bulk of his output burns with a fierce brilliance. "Not only is his music contemporary," says Dweezil, "it's from the future!"

Given that the quantity and breadth is arguably unrivalled, it's possible to lose oneself in Zappa's strange and eclectic world. "One thing I know from my years on this planet is that there are no ex-Zappa fans," says Gail. "Once you get it, you're in for the duration."

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Their time is gonna come – soon: Led Zep sock it to New York on their fist visit to the US in May '69.

GETTY

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

Words: **Johnny Black**
Additional reporting: **Max Bell, Hugh Fielder, Dave Lewis, Dave Ling, Ian Ravendale, Mick Wall**

At the start of 1968, rock's original prime movers were flagging, and another generation of bands were ready to step into their shoes and crank their amps way up. When they'd finished, a whole new genre had been born.

The revolution began on January 12, 1969 when Led Zeppelin released their first album, and reached its crescendo on October 22 that year when they released the follow-up, *Led Zeppelin II*.

During those days and weeks in between, the foundations of hard rock and heavy metal were laid by such visionaries as Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Free, Humble Pie and more. It was a very British revolution, starting in pubs and clubs across the land before going on to conquer the stadiums of the world. By the time the dust had settled, nothing would be the same again.

This is the story of 300 days that changed the world.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The main players in The Birth Of Heavy.

Al Atkins
Singer with Birmingham band The Bitta Suite and founder of Judas Priest.

Freddy Bannister
Heavyweight 60s promoter. The man behind the 1970 Bath Festival Of Blues And Progressive Music, which featured Led Zeppelin. Went on to promote mega-shows at Knebworth throughout the 1970s.

Dave Black
Guitarist with Newcastle band Kestrel. Later replaced Mick Ronson in the post-Bowie Spiders From Mars.

Ritchie Blackmore
Visionary guitarist and co-founder of Deep Purple. Largely responsible for beefing up their sound in 1969.

Mick Box
Founding guitarist with West London band Spice, who later renamed themselves Uriah Heep.

John Bonham
Late Led Zeppelin drummer, whose hard-hitting approach helped define a new, heavier sound.

Edgar Broughton
Founder and guitarist of the British psychedelic rock band named after him. Most famous for their cover of The Fugs' *Out, Demons, Out*.

Geezer Butler
Bassist with Birmingham blues rockers Earth, who later rechristened themselves Black Sabbath.

Geoff Docherty
Sunderland-based promoter and a key figure in the fledgling North East rock scene.

Tony Edwards
Late Deep Purple co-manager.

Peter Frampton
Former singer and guitarist with 60s pop outfit The Herd. Co-founded Humble Pie with Steve Marriott in early 1969.

Andy Fraser
Wunderkind 15-year-old bassist who co-founded Free in 1968.

Roger Glover
Bassist with London pop/rock band Episode Six. Joined Deep Purple along with singer Ian Gillan in 1969.

Ken Hensley
Keyboarist/guitarist with prog rock pioneers The Gods, before joining Spice/Uriah Heep.

Mick Box: Uriah Heap

Edgar Broughton

Neil Warnock

GETTY X3

Tony Iommi
Guitarist with Earth/Black Sabbath and one of the founding fathers of the heavy metal sound.

John Paul Jones
In-demand session musician-turned Led Zeppelin bassist.

Deke Leonard
Guitarist with Welsh acid-rockers Man, leading lights of the Welsh rock scene.

Jon Lord
Late Deep Purple keyboard player and Hammond organ virtuoso. The driving force behind landmark symphonic rock album *Concerto For Group And Orchestra*.

Ken McKenzie
Owner of Multichord Studios in Sunderland, used by many local bands, including David Coverdale's early band Government.

Ozzy Osbourne
Former amateur burglar, and frontman with Earth/Black Sabbath.

Jimmy Page
Ex-Yardbirds guitarist. Founded the New Yardbirds (aka Led Zeppelin) in Autumn 1968.

Ian Paice
Linchpin Deep Purple drummer and the band's only constant member.

Andy Parker
Drummer with London space-rock outfit UFO, who would later reinvent themselves as hard rock/heavy metal figureheads.

Robert Plant
Led Zeppelin singer and former member of West Country bands the Crawling King Snakes and the Band Of Joy.

Terry Reid
Acclaimed 19-year-old blues-rock singer. Famously turned down a chance to join Led Zeppelin, recommending his friend Robert Plant instead.

Jerry Shirley
Drummer with Humble Pie. Joined the band in early 1969 when he was just 17.

Jim Simpson
Former jazz trumpeter-turned-impressario who ran Birmingham club Henry's Blueshouse. Managed Earth/Black Sabbath.

Neil Warnock
London-based booking agent who was partly responsible for the development of the capital's live circuit.

PART 1: SHAPES OF THINGS 1968

As far back as 1967, the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Cream and The Who had turned rock upside down, redrawing the boundaries of what could be done within music. But by 1968 all three found their creative juices becoming increasingly sapped by the demands of endless touring, especially in America.

Ian Paice (Deep Purple): It started in the mid-1960s with Cream, Hendrix and The Who. Those three switched all of us on. When The Who started making their presence felt, rock'n'roll went to a different level. The volume leapt up incredibly. Cream took the musicality of the thing and made that a speciality. And then Hendrix opened up a whole range of new possibilities.

Jack Bruce (Cream): That long US tour, February to June 1968, led to the demise of the band, simply because you can't lock up three guys in a car for that long, and because we never had time to write.

Eric Clapton (Cream): *Rolling Stone* ran an interview with us in which we were really praising ourselves, and it was followed by a review that said how boring our performance had been. The ring of truth had just knocked me backward; I was in a restaurant, and I fainted. And after I woke up I decided that that was the end of the band.

Jimi Hendrix (speaking in a radio interview): I can't play guitar any more the way I want to. I get very frustrated on stage when we play… Every time we come into town, everybody always looks towards us for some kind of answer, for what's happening to them and… which is a good feeling… but it's very hard.

Noel Redding (Jimi Hendrix Experience): We got through the last tour by constantly telling ourselves: "This is our last American tour. We can do it…", when we felt like death warmed up.

GETTY X3

Terry Reid: Every band was breaking up or forming, or breaking up and re-forming. It was like Scrabble, everything flying in all directions. Music was changing. Not the industry, but the groups, and the singles market had become the albums market.

Waiting in the wings were two former Yardbirds guitarists with big plans. One was Jeff Beck, whose eponymous Group released their debut album, *Truth*, in August 1968, laying down the template for what was to come. The other was Beck's old oppo, Jimmy Page, who was putting together his new band, initially dubbed The New Yardbirds.

Mick Box (Spice/Uriah Heep): When Jeff Beck's *Truth* came out, that's when everything started to change. Them and Led Zeppelin. I saw Zeppelin at the Cooksferry Inn in Edmonton. I sat in front of John Bonham's huge drum kit, which was so massive they could barely get it on to the stage. Plant wasn't in front of it, he was by the side. They were very, very exciting.

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Jimmy Page (Led Zeppelin): I wanted the group to be a marriage of blues, hard rock and acoustic music with heavy choruses – a combination that hadn't been explored before. I'd originally thought of getting Terry Reid in as lead singer and second guitarist, but he had just signed with Mickie Most as a solo artist in a quirk of fate. He suggested I get in touch with Robert Plant, who was then in a band called Obbs-Tweedle.

Terry Reid: Everyone knew everybody. I became part of the pool. I was asked to join what became Led Zeppelin. Jimmy Page also asked Steve Marriott and Stevie Winwood cos he wanted a singer and guitarist.

John Paul Jones (Led Zeppelin): As soon as I heard John Bonham play, I knew this was going to be great. We locked together as a team immediately.

Neil Warnock (booking agent): I controlled the talent bookings into a lot of the Central London colleges, and I was seeing the progression of, for example, The Yardbirds becoming Led Zeppelin. We had to bill them as 'Led Zeppelin – formerly The Yardbirds'. They didn't want that, but I had to give it some recognition factor with the kids to help sell tickets.

Page and Beck weren't the only ones standing on the edge of a revolution. As 1968 progressed, a groundswell of bands at the lower end of rock's food chain began to turn up their amps. In London, members of Black Cat Bones and Wilde Flowers joined forces as Free, while in Birmingham a little-known blues band called Earth started to toughen up their sound.

Andy Fraser (Free): The first night we got together to audition each other, we knew we had it. There was just no doubt. So we weren't afraid to go up against anyone. We would tour with The Who, Small Faces, Family, anybody, and we were still confident in each other.

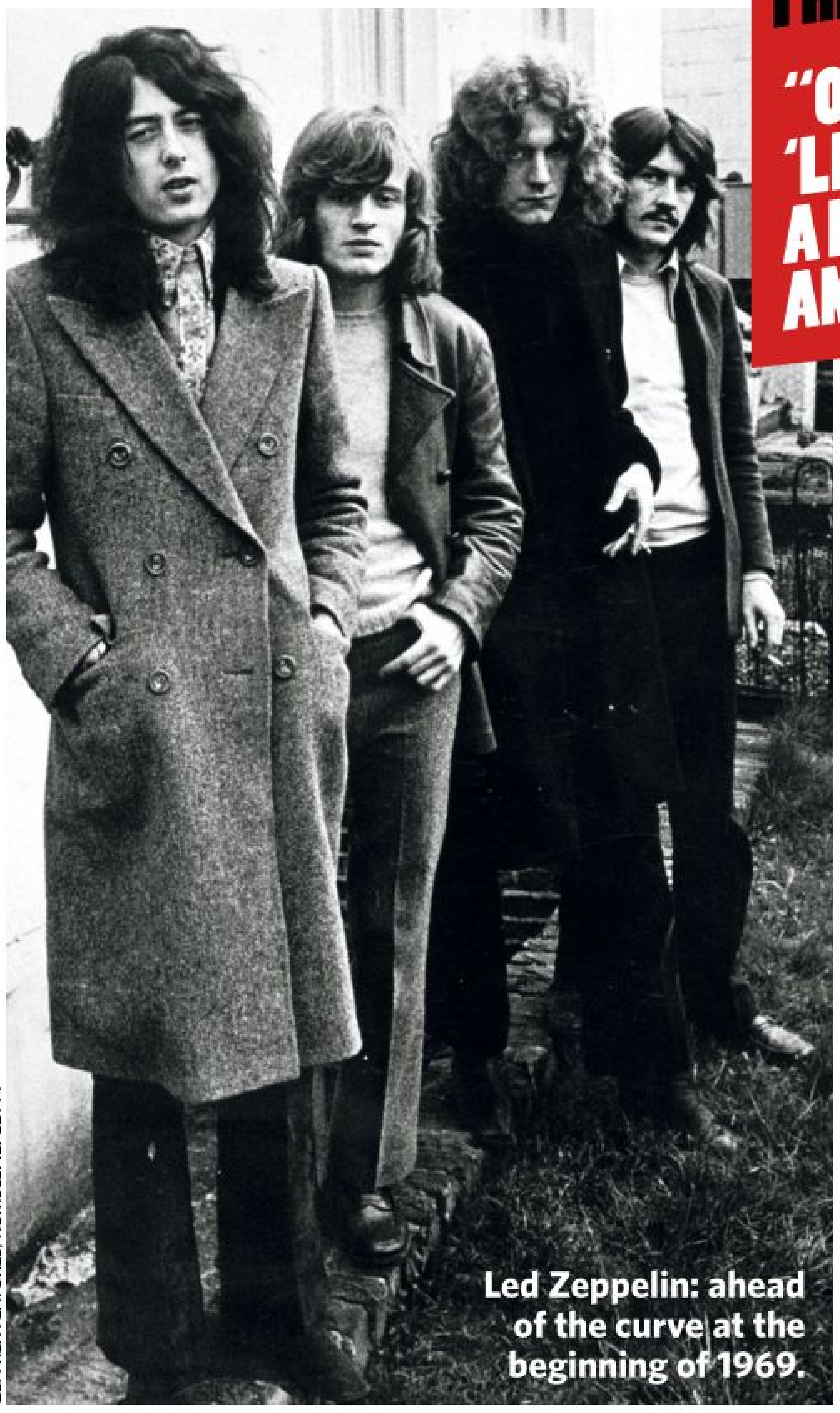
Mick Box: I saw Free in their very early days, at a pub in Wood Green. Their simplicity and energy blew me away.

Andy Fraser: Robert Plant came to see us play in Birmingham. He came back to the hotel afterwards for a jam, which people did a lot in those days, and told us he'd just been offered a gig with the New Yardbirds, on a good wage.

Jim Simpson (Earth/Black Sabbath manager): I had started a blues night, Henry's Blues House, in Birmingham in September 1968, which Tony Iommi and Ozzy Osbourne joined as members. They came along most weeks and we chatted about their band, which was called Earth, and I ended up managing them. They were a blues band, but they were looking for a new direction and, even then, Ozzy was absolutely mesmerising on stage.

Ozzy Osbourne (Earth/Black Sabbath): I went to the same school as the guitarist, Tony Iommi. He was in a band called Mythology with Bill Ward, the drummer. I was in a group called the Rare Breed with Geezer Butler. I didn't like the band. The fucking guitar player was a bully. Geezer agreed and we decided to leave. I put an ad in a music shop in Birmingham and Tony and Bill turned up. We called ourselves Earth.

Humble Pie: one of the bands key to the development of the new, heavier sound.



Led Zeppelin: ahead of the curve at the beginning of 1969.

ZEP: REX FEATURES; HUMBLEPIE: GETTY

Tony Iommi (Earth/Black Sabbath): It was very difficult doing what we did, because it was all soul clubs and blues clubs.

Keith Law (Velvet Fogg): Lots of musos would meet after gigs in Birmingham, at such places as The Cedar, Rum Runner, Opposite Lock, Rebecca's, and after at Alex's Pie Stand, there was a great camaraderie.

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

"OUR PRODUCER, GLYN JOHNS, SAID: 'LET ME PLAY YOU THIS ALBUM. IT'S A NEW BAND, LED ZEPPELIN.' I HEARD IT AND MY JAW JUST HIT THE FLOOR."

PETER FRAMPTON

PART 2: YOUR TIME IS GONNA COME
JANUARY – MARCH 1969

Led Zeppelin were already way ahead of the curve compared to other bands. They had recorded their debut album the previous September, and the buzz around them was growing in Britain and America thanks to some sledgehammer live shows. *Led Zeppelin I* was released on January 12, 1969. It peaked at No.6 in the UK and No.10 in the US . The balloon had gone up.

Jimmy Page: The first album came together really quick. It was cut very shortly after the band was formed. For material, we obviously went right down to our blues roots. I still had plenty of Yardbirds riffs left over.

John Paul Jones: We never listened to the same music. I've always maintained that Zeppelin was the space between us. Bonzo was into soul and Motown, I was into jazz and classical, Jimmy was into rockabilly, blues and folk, and Robert was into blues and Elvis. Nobody on the outside of the band could believe this, but we considered it valuable.

Edgar Broughton: I remember the uniqueness of the music, and having to accept that I'd never heard anything like that before. It was the incredible guitar playing and the violence of the drums that did it for me. And they'd managed to capture this huge heavy rock sound in the studio, which was quite a rare thing in those days.

MOTHERS' PRIDE

How a former ballroom in Birmingham helped shape British rock.

London's Marquee might be more famous today, but Birmingham's Mothers was no less important in the development of British rock in the late 60s. The late John Peel called it "the best club in Britain".

A former ballroom above a furniture shop in the suburb of Erdington, Mothers was opened in 1968 by local manager John 'Spud' Taylor and promoter Phil Myatt. Boasting the slogan 'The Home Of Good Sounds', it swiftly became a stop-off for virtually every band who hit the touring circuit in 1969: Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Deep Purple all played there, as did Free, Terry Reid, Fleetwood Mac, Yes and the Edgar Broughton Band. Traffic made their live debut at Mothers, while Pink Floyd recorded parts of *Ummagumma* on its hallowed stage.

"I can remember Deep Purple coming back from America and me booking them into Mothers," says agent Neil Warnock. "They'd had a big pop single in America which had flopped in England, so they meant very little here. People thought even the name was a bit naff. But when they played at Mothers, everybody went: 'Fuck me, this is great.'"

Like many venues of the era, it was less than glamorous, which only added to its charm. "After you had queued for ages you entered a dark place, passing first through the bar area and then into the Big Room which, by today's gig standards, was tiny," recalls local Mothers regular Andy Goff. "A few tables and chairs at the front and sides, and then a theoretical dance floor in the middle. But who was dancing? We were there for the music."

Sadly this landmark club closed on January 3, 1971 after Taylor and Myatt were unable to work out a leasing arrangement with the landlords. The last artist to play there was a rising pianist from Pinner named Elton John. Happily its significance in rock's development was finally recognised in 2013, when an English Heritage Blue Plaque was unveiled on the site where it used to stand.

The site of what John Peel said at the time was "the best club in Britain".

Andy Parker (Hocus Pocus/UFO): I was a huge fan of The Who, Cream and Hendrix, but Zeppelin's first album made me go: "Jesus!" All of a sudden the music took on this new heaviness.

Andy Fraser (Free): We'd listen to Zeppelin, who were somewhat like us, coming from the blues into rock but with lots of other influences. We'd go: "Yeah, really, really good musicians", but some of their songs weren't as good as their musicianship. Robert Plant would be screaming away and we'd be like: "Couldn't he think of some lyrics?"

Zeppelin's first album proved to be a catalyst for another band who were key to the development of the new, heavier sound. Humble Pie were formed at the beginning of 1969 by Small Faces frontman Steve Marriott and ex-The Herd guitarist Peter Frampton.

Peter Frampton (The Herd/Humble Pie): At the end of 1968 I was in Paris, working on a Johnny Hallyday album with the Small Faces. They went back to do a New Year's Eve date at Alexandra Palace, and I stayed on in Paris with our producer, Glyn Johns. Late on New Year's Eve, Glyn says: "Let me play you this album. We recorded it in ten days. It's this new band, Led Zeppelin." I heard it and my jaw just hit the floor. I just loved Jimmy's playing and the singing, but the thing that really floored me was John Bonham's incredible bass drum sound and feel. Then Steve Marriott actually rang me in between side one and side two of the Zeppelin album. He had walked off stage at Ally Pally, and he says: "I've had it. I'm finished with this band."

Jerry Shirley (drummer, Humble Pie): Meanwhile, I'd been playing a New Year's gig with my then-band, Little Women, and got back to my parents' house sometime after midnight. The phone rang and it's Steve, asking if he can join the band that Peter and I were forming.

Peter Frampton: Basically, Steve had wanted me to join the Small Faces and the others weren't having it. So he told them: "If you won't let Pete join, I'm gonna join Pete's band."

Jerry Shirley: We never saw ourselves as a heavy metal band. We were a really powerful hard-rockin' blues band. We were trying to be Dylan's backing group, The Band, but Mk II. There's one track on their first album called *Chest Fever* which is pretty heavy stuff, not metal, but heavyweight.

Around the same time, Earth travelled south from Birmingham to play their first London gig, supporting jazz-rockers Colosseum at the Marquee club. But this wasn't just a London phenomenon. Elsewhere across the country, similar venues were becoming a breeding ground for a new wave of bands.

Freddy Bannister (concert promoter): Basically, the scene had changed at the end of the 60s from pop groups to more progressive bands. In early January 1969 I put on a show at Bath Pavilion with Jethro Tull, Aynsley Dunbar's Retaliation, Love Sculpture, Jeff Beck, Moby Grape, Amen Corner and John Lee Hooker. That gives you some idea of what was going on.

Ken McKenzie (owner of Sunderland's Multichord Studios): Things changed in Sunderland thanks mainly to a promoter named Geoff Docherty who brought amazing bands to the area. Because of his contacts in London, he could get bands like Pink Floyd and Deep Purple.

Geoff Docherty (North East promoter): I had a six-week gap between gigs by Family and Pink Floyd. I booked Free to do January 13, 1969 for £35. Nobody had heard of them so there weren't many people there. That first time, the people that did come thought it was free to get in, because of the name. I thought it was a stupid name. But the band were young and energetic and fitted together very well. I had faith in them.

Simon Kirke: Free and the North East had a wonderful relationship. Our music was stripped-down, passionate blues that appealed to the very down-home people of the North East.

Geoff Docherty: Whenever I had Free on, the gigs were jam-packed. Everyone went wild. Girls would faint, and I'd lift them up and carry them backstage. I had my suspicions they were doing it on purpose so they could get to meet the group.

Dave Black (Kestrel): North East soul bands changed into rock bands in 1969. They still had brass sections, but started rocking it up and doing songs like *Sunshine Of Your Love*. It was the first time bands started writing songs based on riffs.

Edgar Broughton (Edgar Broughton Band): It wasn't like prog was coming up over there and metal was over here. It was more like this big musical stew, and you'd just stick in a spoon and have a taste. I don't think any of us really knew what we were doing. There was a sense that if you had an idea and reckoned you could see it through, then just do it. Also, amps and speakers were getting more powerful. Suddenly you had that big bass speaker flapping away. It was almost physical, it made your shirt flap. People were starting to make that heavier sound, because they could.

There were still pockets of the country where the wind of change wasn't penetrating. Welsh acid rockers Man, for one, had no truck with many of their British contemporaries.

Deke Leonard (Man): As far as bands like Free, Black Sabbath, Hawkwind and that sort of thing went, we ignored it all. We considered ourselves part of the alternative culture. Our influences were American rock groups, so we listened to their records all day and then made our music in the evening – Zappa, Beefheart, Quicksilver. I liked Terry Reid. He was 24-carat fucking genuine.

Terry Reid: I made good money that year. I was never without a gig, even on what we called the bread-and-butter circuit. There was plenty of butter. Work was plentiful. I think the music I made then stands the test of time.

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Black Sabbath during their exhausting run of shows at Hamburg's Star Club in 1969.

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

"SABBATH USED TO HATE THE ART SCHOOL BANDS. IT WAS OUT AND OUT CLASS WAR AGAINST WEAK-KNEED POP, AND THAT INCLUDED LED ZEPPELIN."

JIM SIMPSON, SABBATH MANAGER

In the final week of January, Cream released their farewell album, *Goodbye*. Peaking at No.1 in the UK and No.2 in the USA, it represented a changing of the guard.

Eric Clapton: We started a ball rolling which I don't like being responsible for. People say we started the heavy metal thing. Which is quite an indictment.

John Bonham (Led Zeppelin): I was influenced by Ginger Baker. He was the first to show that a drummer could be a forward thing in a rock band, not just stuck at the back and forgotten about.

Ginger Baker (drummer, Cream): People say Cream gave birth to heavy metal. If that's so, we should have had an abortion.

Jack Bruce (bassist, Cream): I still don't take the blame for inventing heavy metal. Hang that one on Led Zeppelin.

Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin): There was such a difference, even on first hearing, between us and Cream. There was an intense difference. There were groups in the country other than us who could have filled Cream's place more specifically.

Geezer Butler: Zeppelin paved the way for us. Obviously, we used to get compared to them – they were the heaviest thing, up until we came along. They very much started the genre, and we cashed in on it.

Deke Leonard: I liked Led Zeppelin. Especially when they were proto-heavy metal. We liked hard driving music, something with fire in its belly, not wishy-washy Moody Blues crap. Jethro Tull and Deep Purple, I thought they were tripe.

Deep Purple had already released two patchy albums of proto-prog rock with original singer Rod Evans in 1968, though they had notched up a fluke US hit with their cover of Joe South's *Hush*. In February they kicked off a two-week tour of England at Birmingham's Top Rank club.

Jon Lord (Deep Purple, speaking in 1969): I suppose you could say we are playing symphonic rock. We're classed as an underground group in the States especially, but we were a Top 40 group first, then went underground. There's a possibility that recognition is slow coming here because of that chart success. There is a snobbery, whatever people may say; blues groups who don't like to admit that they'd like the success that comes from hit records. So they go on earning £100 a night, and we're doing twenty times as much.

March 1969 would be a key staging post in the rise of this new music. Early in the month, Led Zeppelin recorded a live session for BBC DJ John Peel's *Top Gear* show, the bastion of underground music. The same month, Peel got his first taste of Earth, at Sunderland's Bay Hotel. And on March 14 Free released their first album, *Tons Of Sobs*.

Deep Purple on stage at Goldsmiths College, London, March 7, 1969.

GETTY X2

Geoff Docherty (promoter): I got Peel to come up. I was so excited. It was like meeting Elvis. Peel was the one who had started the musical revolution. And kept it going. It was Peely that was the draw, not Earth or the headliners, Van Der Graaf. He played some records for the crowd and introduced the bands. Earth didn't really get much of a reaction. They weren't loud. The PA wasn't big enough for that.

Andy Fraser: When we went into the studio to make our first album we were starting from the beginning. We didn't know what it was like to try and create that good feeling of a gig in this total silence. But we learned fast. And it was always about making albums. We didn't even think about what might make a good single. Consequently we didn't even release a single from that first album.

PART 3 : DAZED AND CONFUSED
April – July 1969

As the summer approached, it was hard not to sense a change in the air. For Deep Purple, this meant restructuring themselves to adapt to the new scene. In June, as the band released their third album, singer Rod Evans and bassist Nick Simper were replaced by Ian Gillan and Roger Glover of North London outfit Episode Six. Guitarist Ritchie Blackmore had initially approached Terry Reid for the frontman's job, only for Reid to politely decline.

Roger Glover (Episode Six/Deep Purple): I think Episode Six had 13 or 14 singles out, none of which made it. I had visions of my doing a one man, one guitar thing. Then I heard *Led Zeppelin* and that changed all my ideas musically. I suddenly realised that I wanted to be in a heavy band.

Ritchie Blackmore: I could tell the fashion was going to be for screamers with depth and an overall blues feel, which is why we got Ian. He had a scream, but also had a way of singing which was very different. He's got a lot of identity there, and you always know when it's Ian singing.

Roger Glover: Ian called me and suggested I help him write some songs for Purple. So I said yes. I went to Jon Lord's flat and we played him our songs. He didn't like them, but asked if I wanted to do a session that evening. Of course I said yes, because I knew it meant money. I did the session [June 7, recording the single *Hallelujah* at De Lane Lea studios, London], and made a few constructive suggestions. Then, to my astonishment, they offered me the gig as a bass player.

Ritchie Blackmore: There was a chemistry and, basically, we were all very enthusiastic. Plus the band was very musically inclined. Roger is an excellent catalyst who is very good at putting things together. Ian was a very good showman and a good-looking guy who had an incredible voice. Jon was a very good arranger and musician in the old-school form, who could put it down on paper. I was the mad, irritable guitarist, I suppose, who certain people could relate to, and I thought I also played quite well.

Deep Purple with Malcolm Arnold, who conducted the orchestra for *Concerto For Group And Orchestra.*

Above: Judas Priest. Right: Deep Purple in their bowls 'n' overcoats period.

By the middle of the month the new-look Purple were rehearsing in West London's Hanwell Community Centre, where they found themselves sharing the facilities with local outfit Spice.

Ken Hensley (Spice/Uriah Heep): When I joined Spice they were already in the studio recording the first album and two or three songs were finished, including *Come Away Melinda* and *Wake Up (Set Your Sights)*. What I brought to the band was different songs, obviously, and the Hammond which helped them to evolve.

Mick Box: We wrote *Gypsy* at Hanwell, with Deep Purple rehearsing in the next room. You can imagine the racket we were making between us.

Roger Glover: Ritchie had mentioned that he liked Hendrix's *Fire*. I stood there in the huge, echoey gym and started playing the first thing that came into my head that would convey a similar feeling. They all joined in, making it sound great, and a jam ensued which would set the course of the song *Speed King*. It was exhilarating.

Ken Hensley: It was also at Hanwell that Gerry [Bron, Spice's manager and owner of Bronze Records] walked in and said he was going to change the name from Spice to Uriah Heep. We just said: "Yeah, fine, whatever you want to call it…" and carried on playing, because we were having way too much fun.

On July 5, Led Zeppelin kicked off their third North American tour – a gruelling, 36-date coast-to-coast slog which had them playing arenas and stadiums for the first time. Not only did it consolidate the band's success, it also put this very British movement on the international stage. Other bands benefited from their success, not least Ten Years After and Humble Pie, both of whom were making waves in the US.

Jimmy Page: It was like a tornado, and it went rolling across the country.

DEEP PURPLE, LENNON: GETTY

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Free kick out the jams at the Isle of Wight Festival in August '69.

REX FEATURES

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

"WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO TRY AND CREATED THAT GOOD FEELING OF A GIG IN TOTAL SILENCE IN THE STUDIO. BUT WE LEARNED FAST."

ANDY FRASER, FREE

Pete Townshend (The Who): People used to come and see us, and in Britain it was: "You are our favourite group with Deep Purple." And I'd go: "Huh?" And in America it used to be: "You are our favourite group with Ten Years After." And it was very hard to live with, in a way, that we were being lumped in with these very heavy metal bands.

Peter Frampton: Although we had heavy riffs, we also had Steve singing over the top with his very soulful, R&B, blues voice, which wasn't at all how metal vocalists would sing.

PART 4: NATIVITY IN BLACK
July – August 1969

In July 1969, Birmingham's Earth learned that at least one other band had the same name.

Jim Simpson: We were all making suggestions for the new name, but none of them seemed right until Geezer said Black Sabbath, which he'd got from the title of an old Boris Karloff horror movie.

Ozzy Osbourne: It was a different angle. At the time, it was all bells and flowers and hippies.

Tony Iommi: That's when it all started to happen. The name sounded mysterious, it gave people something to think about, and it gave us a direction to follow.

Jim Simpson: The Sabs were always captivating, very in-your-face live, but the thing that really made them tight was a stint at the Star Club in Hamburg, where The Beatles had played, in August.

Ozzy Osbourne: We used to play really loud. As loud as we could get it, trying to drown out all the conversation in the club.

Jim Simpson: When they came back, Tony's fingers were bleeding and Ozzy couldn't speak. They'd been playing every day from eight at night till four in the morning, 45 minutes on, 15 off.

The day before the newly christened Black Sabbath played their last gig at the Star Club, a landmark event was taking place on a farm in upstate New York. Beginning on August 15 and billed as 'Three Days Of Peace And Love', the Woodstock Festival was the biggest music happening to that point. For many British musicians at the time, Woodstock in particular and American culture in general were a world away from what they were doing.

Pete Townshend: All these hippies wandering about, thinking the world was going to be different from that day on. As a cynical English arsehole, I wandered through it all and felt like spitting on the lot of them and shaking them, trying to make them realise that nothing had changed and nothing was going to change. Not only that, what they thought was an alternative society was basically a field full of six-foot-deep mud laced with LSD. If that was the world they wanted to live in, then fuck the lot of them.

Terry Reid: All the Vietnam stuff washed over me, but I was aware of Woodstock.

Ian Paice: That whole flower-power thing was very much a US-based thing. A few bands jumped on to the bandwagon and that was alright, they made some nice pop records, but that's all they were.

Al Atkins (The Bitta Suite/Judas Priest): Birmingham was such a rough- and-ready, heavily industrialised area. When you left school you had two choices: you could work in a factory, or you could work in a foundry. In West Bromwich you didn't see people sitting under palm trees wearing Bermuda shorts, strumming acoustic guitars. Where I come from even the sparrows cough.

Mick Box: The nine-to-five lifestyle wasn't an option, and sport or music were the only realistic escape routes.

Jim Simpson: Sabbath used to hate all of the art school bands. It was an out and out class war against weak-kneed pop, and that included Zeppelin.

Ken Hensley: We weren't overly concerned with class distinctions. The music was aimed at the audience, whoever they were. Most of the bands knew that we have to give them something they didn't have to work to hard to understand.

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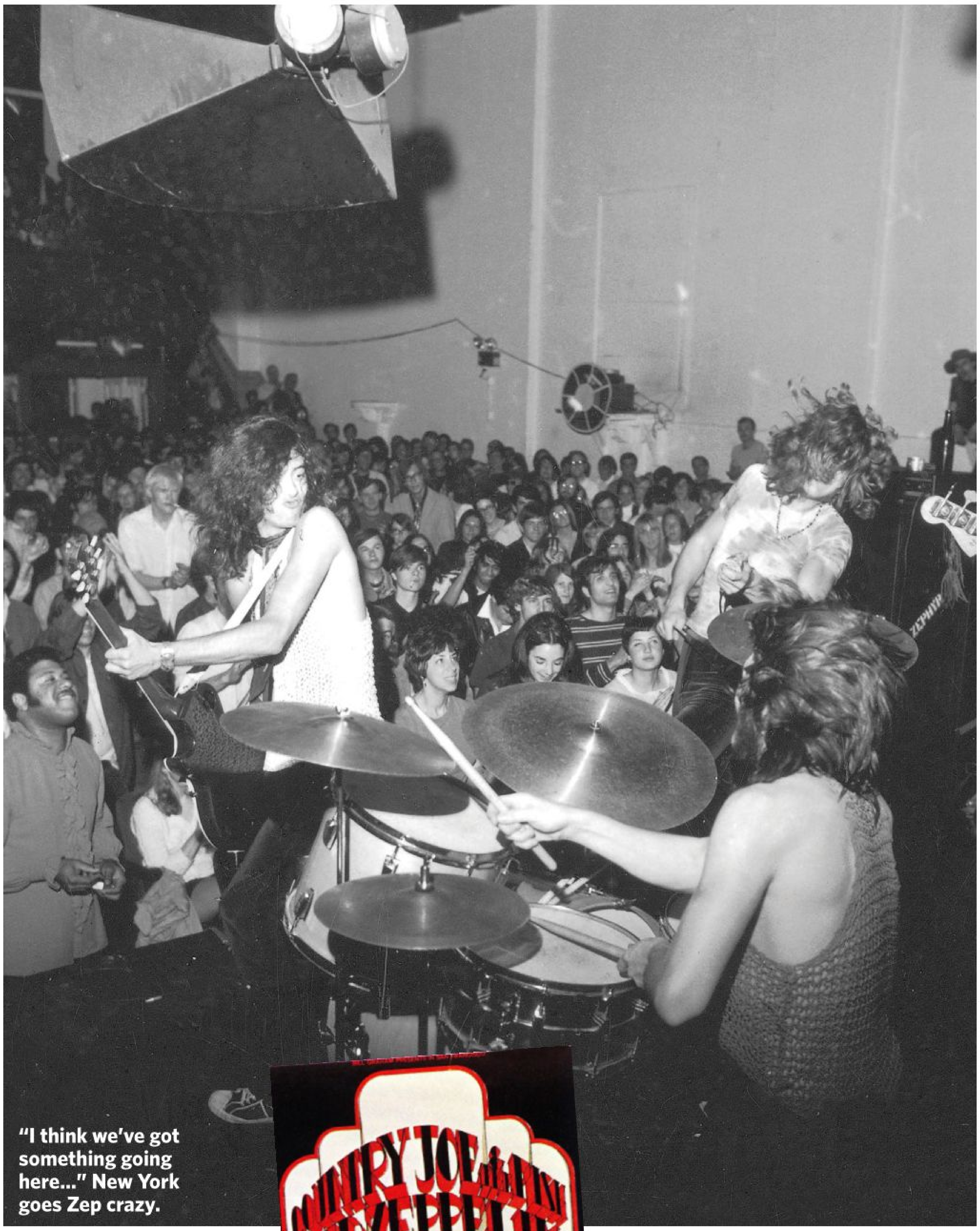
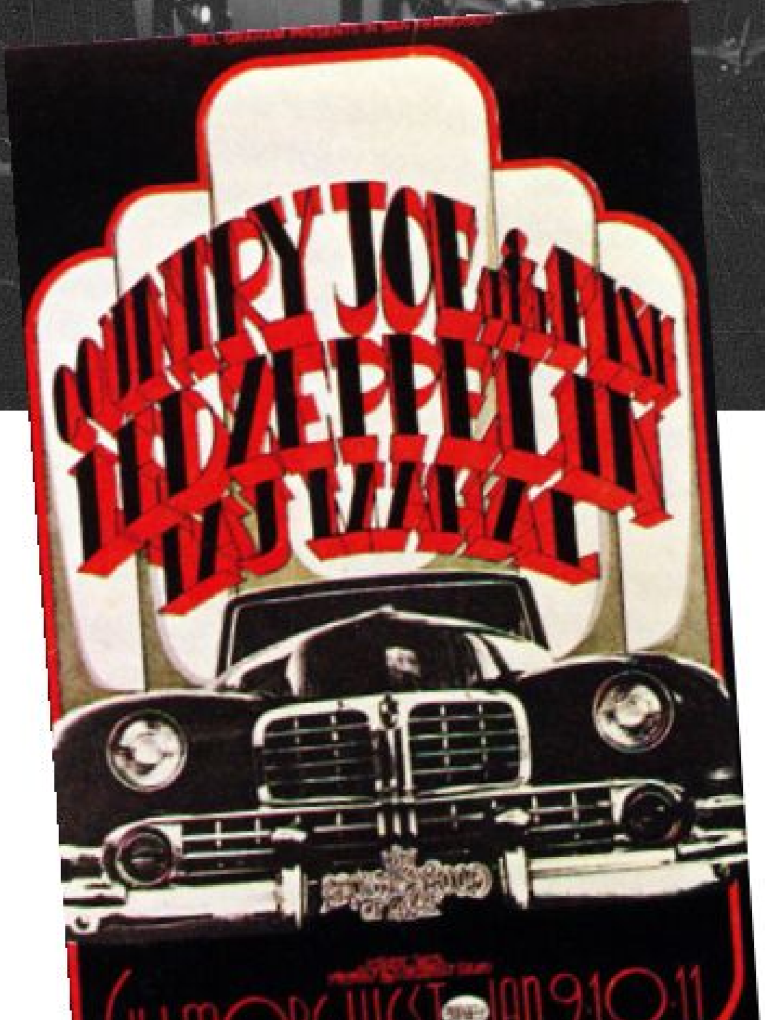


"I think we've got something going here..." New York goes Zep crazy.

The Zeppelin has landed: Plant and Jones arrive in the US.



On August 30, as legions of flower-painted camper vans parked in serried ranks for the second Isle of Wight Festival, the rechristened Black Sabbath played their very first gig under their new name, at the Malvern Winter Gardens.

Jim Simpson: There was no band as heavy as the Sabs. We had a strap-line on our adverts, which was: 'Makes Led Zeppelin sound like a kindergarden house band'. That's the flag we sailed under.

Tony Iommi: A couple of years before, in the factory where I worked, I did sheet metal work, and the cutter came down on my fingers, took the ends of my middle and ring finger off.

Geezer Butler: Tony tuned down to make it easier to grip the strings. He made himself plastic fingertips.

Tony Iommi: Before the accident, I could play in the normal way, using full chords and everything. But after the accident, I had to think and play differently. I came up with these fatter chords that I could play with less fingers.

The equipment the bands used was key to this new sound. Amps were getting bigger and more powerful. Bass strings were becoming fatter and more resonant. Conversely, drugs played a minimal part in the development of many bands' sound.

Jim Simpson: The relationship between Sabbath's equipment and their music was much more important than it was for a ska band or a pop band. If Tony saw someone with a stack of speakers taller than his he would spit blood.

Edgar Broughton: We had so many speakers at one time. If four or five went off we'd just shrug and carry on. We landed up with these great big 300-watt Marshall cabinets. I mean, you could almost lie on the sound.

Peter Frampton: We were playing Gretschs, then Steve and I switched over to a Gibson Les Paul. The Les Paul offered a heavier sound. If you looked at metal bands, well Ritchie Blackmore always played a Strat, Jimmy Page played a Les Paul.

Ken Hensley: One competitive area was who had the most Marshall stacks on stage. When you consider we were coming out of an age of The Beatles and Cliff Richard, suddenly everyone wanted to turn everything up to eleven.

Al Atkins: Me and [future Judas Priest bassist] Bruno Stapenhill were invited to a Marshall exhibition in Birmingham. Deep Purple played there, and they were so loud they just blew us away. Right away I knew I had to have a band like that – to do something really, really loud.

Edgar Broughton: When we first started recording at Abbey Road all the technicians in their lab coats would start looking concerned whenever the needles went into the red. Just a year later needles were constantly going into the red and everybody had got used to it.

Jim Simpson: In my time with Sabbath I had no indication whatsoever of any drugs usage in the band. They drank beer. It's a working-class thing. They worked hard and they drank hard. Drugs didn't come in with Sabbath until much later.

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

"I CALL OUR '69 TOUR 'THE LED ZEPPELIN TOUR'. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME WE HAD TO PLAY FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF. I BLAME JIMMY PAGE."

CHARLIE WATTS, THE ROLLING STONES

GETTY X3

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Edgar Broughton: Drugs did have an influence, both good and bad. We just smoked hashish and occasionally did some mescaline or some mushrooms. I suppose you could describe us as intelligently cautious. And most of us are still around.

Ken Hensley: Drugs were never constructive. Maybe we'd try a little bit here and there but we knew in our hearts of hearts that we didn't need it. It was only later that drugs became such a destructive force.

While there was camaraderie between some of the bands, many others operated in a vacuum. There may have been a revolution going on, but in part it was an accidental one.

Andy Fraser: We weren't really aware of bands like Black Sabbath. I was more likely to be playing the new Gladys Knight single to the other guys in the band, or Paul would rush in and play something by Otis Redding.

Geezer Butler: Zeppelin were our favourite band by that time. It was all we listened to. And I used to know Planty and Bonham from Birmingham, so we were glad that they'd finally done something. That's who we used to get stoned to together – lying down on the floor, smoking our dope and listening to Zeppelin.

Black Sabbath begun their recording career on August 22, when they recorded two tracks, *The Rebel* and *A Song For Jim*, at Trident Studios in London. Shortly after, they recorded an entire album of demos at Birmingham's Zella Studios.

Jim Simpson: Once Sabbath started writing and recording it was impossible to figure out what their influences were. There was a huge chasm between what came before and them. It was not step by step, it was a leap, and it came from them.

Tony Iommi: We started off playing blues, but the first time we threw in a couple of our own songs, *Black Sabbath* and *Wicked World*, people came up and said: "We really loved those two songs." We were well pleased.

Jim Simpson: They were so well-rehearsed that the recordings in Birmingham were a cinch. It was just a case of getting the levels and pressing play. But I took the demos to fourteen record companies and got fourteen straight nos. They could not understand it. If they had sounded like Simon And Garfunkel there would have been something the A&R guys could compare it to, but they'd just never heard anything like Sabbath.

PART 5: BRING IT ON HOME
September – October 1969

By the autumn, the new scene's momentum was gathering pace exponentially. Perversely, the Deep Purple Mk 2 decided it was time to make a fully fledged symphonic rock album, *Concerto For Group And Orchestra*, recorded at the Royal Albert Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Preposterous? Yes. But also proof of their ambition.

Tony Edwards (Deep Purple manager): Jon Lord said to me that he dreamed of writing a work that could be performed by a rock group and a symphony orchestra. I came home, booked the Albert Hall [for Sep 24], and he was appalled.

Jon Lord: I'd come back from a gig at three in the morning and have to sit up the rest of the night scoring for a 100-piece orchestra. It drove a wedge between me and the rest of the band. But it did make us famous.

Ritchie Blackmore: I thought it was a total gimmick. I told Jon I'd be prepared to try it, but that I had a lot of heavy rock numbers I wanted to put on an LP, and we'd see which one took off. I didn't want to be involved with the concerto because of the novelty effect, and the press we were getting out of playing it at the Royal Albert Hall, but I said that if the next LP didn't take off I was prepared to play with orchestras for the rest of my life.

On October 16, Black Sabbath entered Regent Sound Studios in London to record their debut album. It took them eight hours and cost a grand total of £600.

Geezer Butler: We went into the studio, set up our equipment and recorded it as a live gig. Tony did a couple of overdubs, solos and things, and that was it.

Jim Simpson: By letting them just be Sabbath, producer Roger Bain got the best out of them. All he did was record it faithfully. Roger's only real masterstroke was adding thunder and lightning to the start of the album, which gave it a great

OUT, DEMONS, OUT!
Need a bit of controversy? Try black magic and on-stage naked sacrifices .

Black Sabbath may have found themselves pegged as a 'satanic' band in their early days, but they had nothing on another band with a similar name who also emerged in 1969: Black Widow.

Formed in Leicester, they became notorious for their stage show, in which they 'sacrificed' a naked girl, and also for their association with Alex and Maxine Sanders – the so-called 'King And Queen Of The Witches'. Their debut LP *Sacrifice*, which included the spooky *Come To The Sabbat*, remains a landmark meeting of black magic and heavy rock.

"We were the first band to get into black magic and base a show on it," says Clive Beer-Jones, the group's flute and saxophone player.

It started innocuously enough. The band began life as Pesky Gee!, in 1966, covering soul hits in pubs and clubs. By the time they released their sole album as Pesky Gee!, *Exclamation Mark*, in '69, they'd moved away from soul covers to psychedelic rock. But when that record sank without traced they realised that an even more drastic rethink was in order to stand out from the other heavy rock bands who'd begun to dominate the music scene.

"We found we were trapped with all the other bands who were also going a bit heavy," says Beer-Jones. "So our drummer, Clive Box, came up with the idea that we should go down the black magic route. And we all had an interest in it."

By September 1969 they'd changed their name to Black Widow, and soon after met Alex and Maxine Sanders, who would help steer the band's philosophical direction on stage and off.

"Alex made sure we used the right words and demon names, and directed us on stage with the magic circle," says Beer-Jones. "He always used to reckon we could conjure a demon. We tried it every night on stage, but it never worked."

With vocalist Kip Trevor pretending to ritually sacrifice a naked girl with a knife during live shows, the band's notoriety grew. It reached a peak when they played London's Lyceum Ballroom, which also hosted the Miss World contest. On hearing about Black Widow's antics, furious Miss World organiser Eric Morley told the band that the sacrificed girl had to be fully clothed.

"Strangely enough, she ended up naked," says Beer-Jones. "There were reporters and photographers there, and we ended up in the *News Of The World*. That was the start of the 'Don't let your kids see this band!' thing."

The band's debut album, the prog-influenced *Sacrifice*, was released in March 1970, a month after Black Sabbath's own debut, and caused a minor stir – not least among confused record buyers. "A lot of people asked for the album by 'the black magic band' and were sold the Sabbath album."

The appeal of the occult soon wore off for some members, and they ditched the black magic trappings for their next two albums. The band split in 1973.

Today, Beer-Jones continues to fly the Black Widow flag. Their first three albums are due to be released in 2014, includinge a deluxe, three-disc version of *Sacrifice*. **IR**

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Deep Purple rehearse with the Royal Philharmonic at the Albert Hall in September '69

atmospheric opening. When I took the finished album back round all those record companies again, it got rejected. At the last minute, I got a call from a guy, Olav Wyper, at a newly set up label, Vertigo. Olav had been at CBS when I took the album there, and said he'd now like to do a deal. This was only because, for Vertigo's second tranche of three releases, someone had failed to deliver masters for VO6. So they signed Black Sabbath as a makeweight, because we had finished masters which could be delivered in a hurry.

Tony Iommi: I remember we got a poxy £400 for signing, and a crap royalty rate, but we really weren't bothered about the money, because we didn't have any money anyway.

On October 22, nearly 300 days after their first album, Jimmy Page and co released *Led Zeppelin II*. Both heavier and more textured than their debut, it far outstripped the success of its predecessor. Their label, Atlantic, received advance orders of 400,000 copies – nearly 10 times as many as *Led Zeppelin*. It peaked at No.1 in both the UK and the US. The musical revolution they had started had now officially gone worldwide.

Jimmy Page: That album captured the energy of being on the road. That's what I like about it. That record and the period around it seems like a tidal wave now.

Robert Plant: That was the album that was going to dictate whether or not we had the staying power and the capacity to stimulate. It was still blues-based, but it was a much more carnal approach to the music and quite flamboyant.

Charlie Watts (the Rolling Stones): I call that tour [the Stones' Winter 1969 US tour] the Led Zeppelin tour, because it was the first time we had to go on and play for an hour-and-a-half. I blame it on Jimmy Page. Led Zeppelin had come to the States, and they would do a twenty-minute drum solo and endless guitar solos.

Freddie Mercury (writing to his flatmate in 1969): "Just heard *Zeppelin II* LP and it's a knock-out. Saw them at the Lyceum and they were really great."

PART 6: WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS
OCTOBER 1969... AND BEYOND

In the wake of Zeppelin's success, a growing army of new bands began picking up their lead. In Birmingham, singer Al Atkins formed Judas Priest. In London, fledgling band Hocus Pocus changed their name to UFO. Hard rock, heavy rock, heavy metal – call it what you will, but it was here to stay. Music had changed forever.

Al Atkins: Our bass player, Bruno Stapenhill, came up with the name from the Bob Dylan song *The Ballad Of Frankie Lee And Judas Priest*. I was never a fan of Heep or UFO. I didn't play in bands with keyboards. Black Sabbath was the style that we wanted to go in, writing bigger and bigger riffs.

Neil Warnock: As 1969 went on, the heavier bands started to take off in the Marquee in Soho, the Greyhound in Croydon, the Wake Arms in Epping… We all know that this kind of music is all about the blue-collar working man having a beer and a bit of sound. That's where it found its audience. By the end of the year, if one of those emerging heavy bands came out of a gig with £100 they'd think that was a result. But it was those bands, Sabbath, Deep Purple and their like, that provided my core income in the next decade.

Mick Box: I don't remember hearing the term 'heavy metal'. It's just a term used by journalists – no offence. Okay, things got heavier, but to me all of it was good rock music.

Ken Hensley: It felt like we were part of something that was very exciting. A real energy was building, not just among the bands, and we spent time with Purple, Sabbath and the rest on tour. We also did many shows with Led Zeppelin – but with the kids as well. It was that post-Vietnam time when everyone was looking for something new and different. It all combined to make the thing like an unstoppable train.

Edgar Broughton: I was aware that this heavy music was attracting its own cult following. And there was a bit of a 'them and us' thing about it as well. Some of them wouldn't listen to anything else. A lot of the bands that came up under the Led Zeppelin thing were just buying into a formula, really. You know, playing certain chords because they knew it would get a reaction.

Ian Paice (drummer, Deep Purple): It was a breakaway from what was acceptable and normal, that's for sure, but within a year it had become the norm. Every kid looked like that and listened to the same form of music. It's amazing how quickly fashion can take hold of public taste to be adapted by a whole generation.

Mick Box: If I'm perfectly honest, it really *was* that good. It was a vibrant, wonderful time. There were venues aplenty, the fashion thing was going on… I thank God I was born at just the right time to be a part of it.

Additional Sources: NME, Sounds, Q, The Concert File by Dave Lewis and Simon Pallett.
Black Sabbath: Symptom Of The Universe by Mick Wall is out now on Orion Books.

THE BIRTH OF HEAVY

"I FELT LIKE WE WERE PART OF SOMETHING VERY EXCITING. A REAL ENERGY WAS BUILDING. IT WAS LIKE AN UNSTOPPABLE TRAIN."

KEN HENSLEY, URIAH HEEP

GETTY X2

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Leaders of the pack: Zeppelin were the ones who really set the 'birth of heavy' ball rolling.

RON RAFFAELLI

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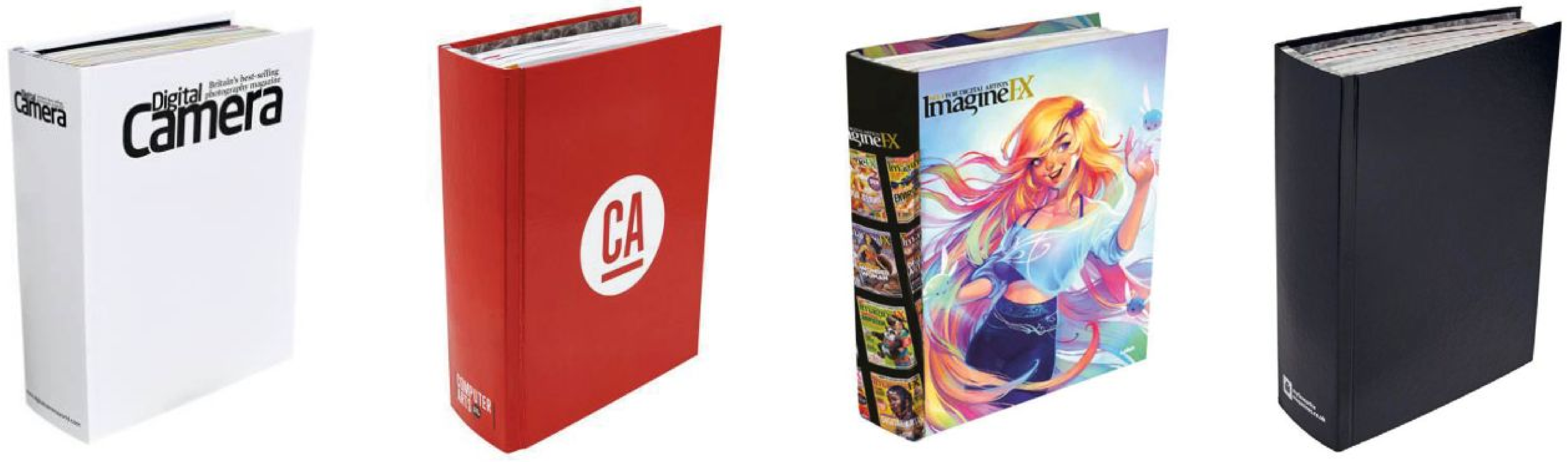

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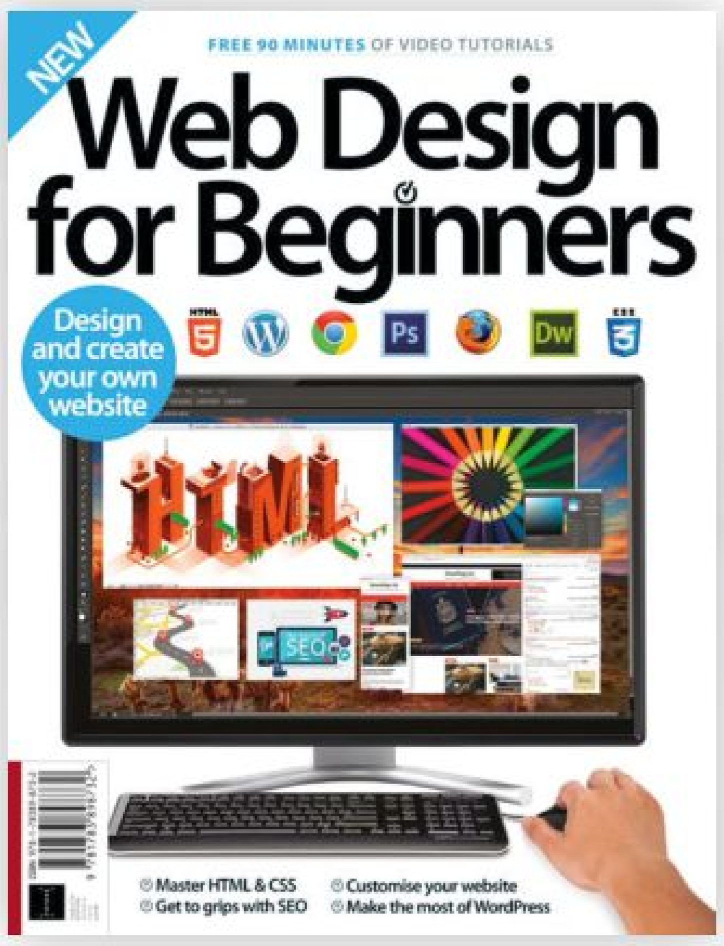

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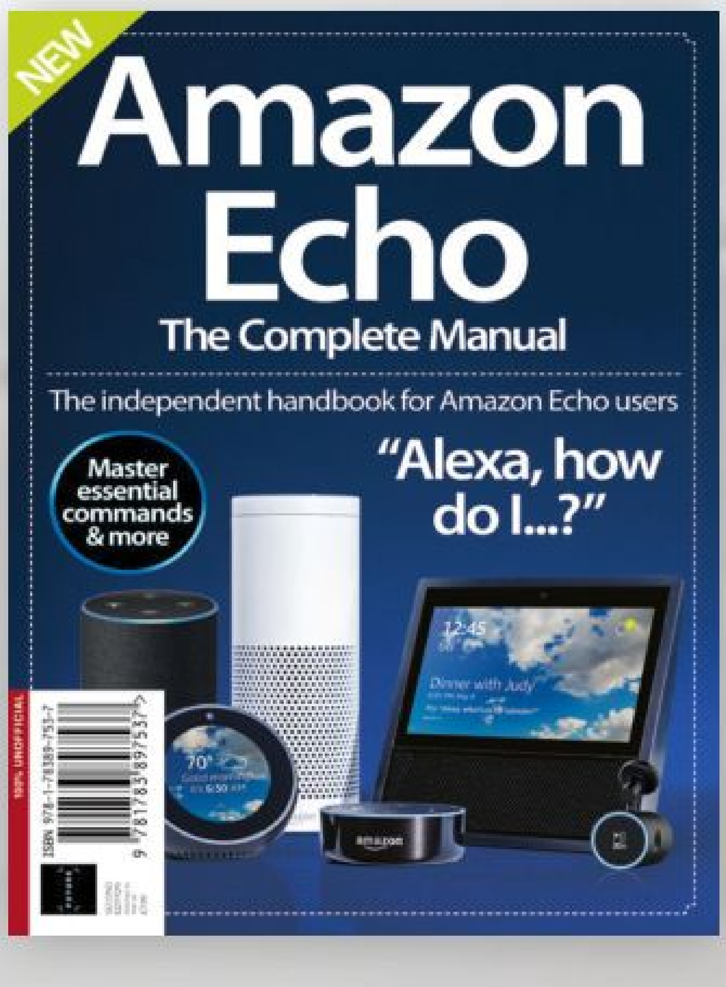

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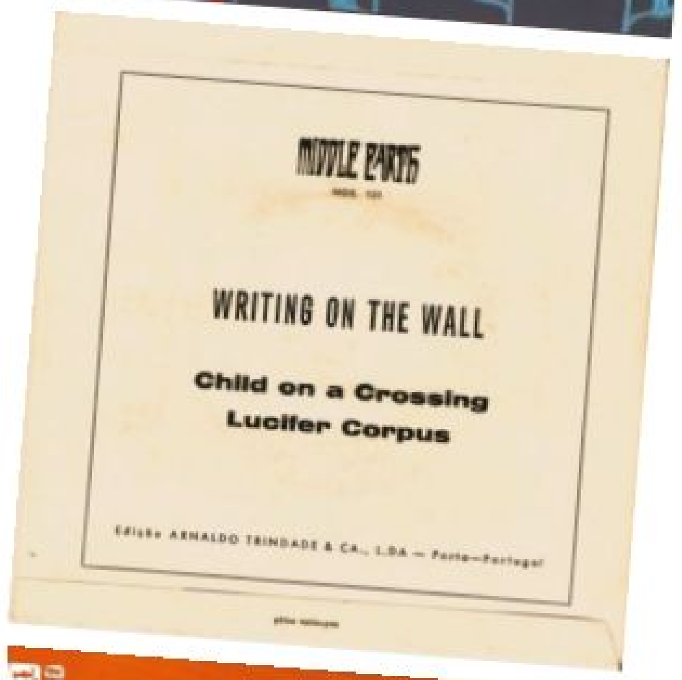
THE IN SOUND FROM WAY OUT

Words: **Max Bell**



The Sound of 1969 was the newborn heavy rock. Cop an earful of the turn of that decade and experience the Birth Of Heavy...

1 LED ZEPPELIN
DAZED AND CONFUSED (ATLANTIC)

Yer actual 'birth of heavy'. The New Yardbirds performed this in '68. Jimmy Page 'borrowed' the title from Jake Holmes's acid-folk song, modifying the melody and lyric. The rest is history.

2 DEEP PURPLE
APRIL (HARVEST)

The band cast off their pop shackles with this 12-minute epic by Ritchie Blackmore and Jon Lord, featuring the guitarist's longest solo to that date.

3 CREEPY JOHN THOMAS
TRIPPIN' LIKE A DOG AND ROCKIN' LIKE A BITCH (RCA)

This Anglo-Australian-German quartet were bad lads with a cult following. Reminiscent of Steppenwolf and early BÖC, this track is as good as its title.

4 WRITING ON THE WALL
LUCIFER CORPUS (MIDDLE EARTH)

Menacing Scots who debuted with *The Power Of The Picts*, a heavy brew of duelling axes and Hammond. Their doom-rock often supported Black Sabbath.

5 MAN
SPUNK ROCK (PYE)

The Welsh group's showcase gave Deke Leonard and Micky Jones room to stretch. Pye objected to the title, but merely changed it to *Spunk Box*.

6 JUNIOR'S EYES
PLAYTIME (REGAL ZONOPHONE)

Bowie's favourite London boys featured the psych-rock of forgotten guitar hero Mick Wayne and Tim Renwick. Their album, *Battersea Power Station*, is immense. Judging by riffs nicked for *Ziggy*, Dave and Mick Ronson agreed.

7 METHUSELAH
JOHN (ELEKTRA)

Something of an oddity, Methuselah boasted the guitar prowess of Les Nicol and had the best metal logo. Gospel truth is all over this gem.

8 HIGH TIDE
DEATH WARMED UP (LIBERTY)

Guitarist/vocalist Tony Hill and violinist Simon House kick up a storm on this nugget from their *Sea Shanties*. The XXX cover art is stupendous.

9 BLONDE ON BLONDE
RIDE WITH CAPTAIN MAX (PYE)

Welsh industrial meets sulphuric acid. The gatefold for their *Contrasts* album shows a naked blonde with a tarantula crawling up her buttock.

10 PUSSY
G.E.A.B. (MORGAN BLUE TOWN)

Home Counties psychos fronted by Dek Boyce and Barry Clark. They launched their Floyd-esque lysergia at the Scotch of St James and should have been huge. Time to rescue them from obscurity.

11 THE IDLE RACE
DAYS OF THE BROKEN ARROWS (LIBERTY)

Before The Move and ELO, Jeff Lynne warped around on this enigmatic cowboys-and-Indians tale, lifting part of Roy Wood's *Wild Tiger Woman*.

12 JUICY LUCY
MISSISSIPPI WOMAN (VERTIGO)

Post-blues rock with Neil Hubbard and San Diego's Glenn Ross Campbell on guitars. Their debut's cover shows a naked personage under the contents of a greengrocer's stall. Fruity!

13 ANDROMEDA
KEEP OUT 'COS I'M DYING (RCA)

Much fêted by the Sabs and Townshend, John Du Cann's prog-psych trio blitzed the head hordes. Their one album is a classic, but this is a B-side.

14 COLOSSEUM
THE MACHINE DEMANDS A SACRIFICE (VERTIGO)

First release on the legendary Vertigo label, now synonymous with the birth of acid-jazz fusion.

15 EDGAR BROUGHTON BAND
EVIL (HARVEST)

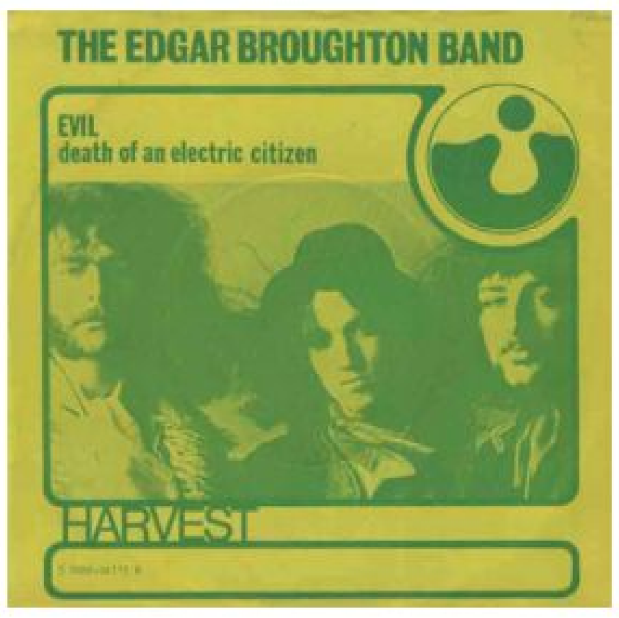
Anarcho-metal punks who handed out Dulux so fans could trash the local civic centre, theirs was the first single released by Harvest. Demonic.

16 GUN
LONG HAIR WILDMAN (EPIC)

A stone-cold classic. The Gurvitz brothers' warning not to cut your hair and wear a suit is as good as anything by the Jeff Beck Group or The Who at this time. Fact.

17 MICHAEL CHAPMAN
NO-ONE LEFT TO CARE (HARVEST)

Is he some old folkie? No he isn't! Chapman mixes acoustic charm and electric ragas but he's as revolutionary as Led Zep. He beats himself up in the lyrics and finds catharsis on guitar.



18 KING CRIMSON
21ST CENTURY SCHIZOID MAN (ISLAND)

Robert Fripp's free-form riffing on this anti-Vietnam number was like no one else. Not for the faint-hearted, KC were no sunshine band.

19 KEEF HARTLEY
HALFBREED (DERAM)

Though he played Woodstock,

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A Taste of 'heavy': Cork's power trio with Rory Gallagher (right).

GETTY

drummer Keith Hartley from Preston was a bandleader who replaced Ringo in some old Merseybeat group. Here he is in all his Native American finery. A weirdo, a true star.

20 TASTE
BLISTER ON THE MOON (POLYDOR)

Irish whizz-kid Rory Gallagher grinds his gears on this amalgam of Hendrix and Cream. Twice released as a single, it also kicks off Taste's debut album with ferocious force.

21 FAMILY
THE WEAVER'S ANSWER (REPRISE)

Leicester's finest are hard to categorise. This sounds like it should be a folk song, but gathers momentum and turns nuts. Especially great live, it formed the basis for Beefheart-style freak-outs.

22 SPOOKY TOOTH
HANGMAN HANG MY SHELL ON A TREE (ISLAND)

Luther Grosvenor, with his impeccable riffs, and rhythm section Mike Kellie and Greg Ridley were archetypal musician's musicians who rocked like fuck. Hear this on the grand *Spooky Two*, produced by Jimmy Miller.

23 STEAMHAMMER
JUNIOR'S WAILING (CBS)

Sublime hard rock from, er, Worthing. Twin guitarists Martin Pugh and Martin Quittenton (later Rod Stewart's foil) had consummate ability. This single was on their debut *Reflections* album.

24 SAVOY BROWN
SAVOY BROWN BOOGIE (DECCA)

Live at the Cook's Ferry Inn, Edmonton, this allows guitarists Kim Simmonds and Lonesome Dave Peverett to segue Berry into Hendrix. So of its time you might smell patchouli on your armpits.

25 GALLIARD
SKILLET (DERAM NOVA)

A bizarre clash of folk, blues, funk and Black Country rock, like a collision between Robert Plant and Sons Of Champlin. A Birmingham band that slipped through the cracks, Galliard were good and greasy.

26 FREE
GOIN' DOWN SLOW (ISLAND)

From their *Tons Of Sobs* debut produced by Guy Stevens, the wild-eyed Free boys channel teenage angst into an old blues number and give it the full Willesden sound.

27 MIGHTY BABY
AT A POINT BETWEEN FATE AND DESTINY (HEAD)

The apogee of British psychedelia, Mighty Baby rose from the ashes of The Action, signed to Parlophone and flourished at the riotous end of the decade, thanks to the guitars of Alan 'Bam' King and Martin Stone. Druggy, to say the least.

28 RARE BIRD
GOD OF WAR (CHARISMA)

Pop-prog-psych merchants who used lashings of keyboards rather than guitars, Rare Bird were Charisma's virginal offering. Producer John Anthony delivered a sound matching ELP in their pomp.

29 AMBROSE SLADE
AIN'T GOT NO HEART (FONTANA)

Noddy, Dave, Jim and Don's *Beginnings* debut operated in the hinterland between Midlands skinhead chic and hippie hedonism. This cover of a Zappa tune is the Nobby's nuts. They had a few minor hits afterwards.

30 HEAD MACHINE
ORGASM (MAJOR MINOR)

Where did Ken Hensley get his ideas? This pre-Uriah Heep sex fest ended 1969 with echoes of his previous band, The Gods. It was taken from the *Orgasm* concept album which, sadly, doesn't feature a track called *Sixty Nine*. A regrettable omission.

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